EXCLUSIVE: NICK TANDY Q&A

Le Mans winner and sportscar hero faces his toughest test: the readers' questions... **page 14**

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Scotsman rejoins Team Dynamics Honda squad to chase a fourth British touring car crown

SHEDDEN TO RETURN TO BTCC FOR 2021 BATTLE

Shedden will be reunited with Civic

By Matt James

Three-time title winner Gordon Shedden will make a return to the British Touring Car Championship grid this season at the wheel of a Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R.

The Scotsman, who lifted the crown in 2012, 2015 and 2016, will return to the squad that has given him all of his title successes. In a busy week for the Droitwich team, it also confirmed that Dan Cammish, who has raced for the crew for the last three seasons, was being axed from the squad for 2021.

Although there has been no official confirmation, it seems likely that team boss and driver Matt Neal, a three-time title winner himself, will step down from the cockpit ahead of the fresh campaign.

Shedden, 42, left the BTCC to drive in the World TCR competition with the Audi Sport Leopard operation for two seasons, but the team withdrew from the competition at the end of 2019.

Shedden, a 48-time race winner in the BTCC, said: "I've been keeping an eye on the championship, and it looks mega competitive, but my fight and determination is as high as it's ever been, so I'll be giving it my all."

Full story, page 4
Dan Cammish column, page 26

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT MOTORSPORT NEWS

LAUNCH

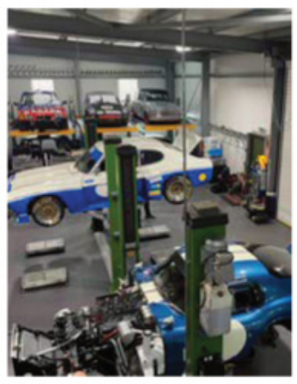
WRAPS OFF LEWIS'S NEW CHARGER

Mercedes reveals its W12 Formula 1 challenger **P4**

INSIGHT

INSIDE THE JORDAN RACING TEAM

How the historic race team became a benchmark **P18**



INTERVIEW

LAPPI'S HUNGER TO RETURN TO THE WRC

Why the Finn has his sights on top-flight comeback **P24**

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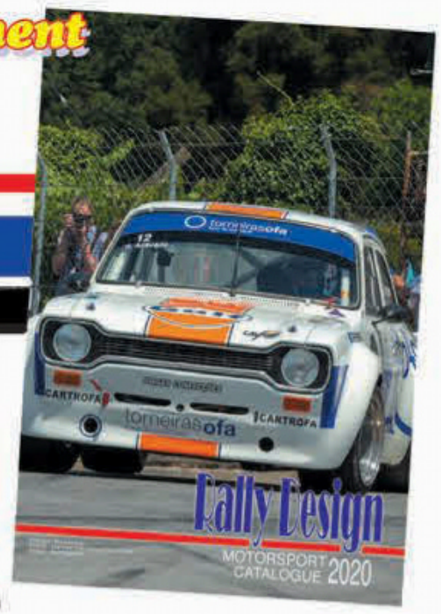

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HELICAL LSDs, BLACKLINE

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TRANSMISSION PARTS, BLACKLINE

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ESCORT BRAKING PARTS

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7x13	£76.00	£91.20
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8x15	£99.00	£118.80

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Escort Mk2 Front heated laminated screen (inc. rubber)	£198.60	£238.32
Escort Mk1 front screen rubber	£24.92	£29.90
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Escort Mk2 front screen rubber	£29.08	£34.90
Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber	£29.08	£34.90
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Escort Mk2 Rubber Parts

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Bonnet bump stop, centre-rear		£5.10	£6.12
Wiring loom bulkhead grommet		£6.90	£8.28
Bonnet release cable grommet		£5.20	£6.24
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Handbrake backplate dust boots	pair	£7.10	£8.52
Spedo cable bulkhead grommet		£5.20	£6.24
Throttle pedal pad		£5.20	£6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads	pair	£8.00	£9.60
Shock absorber top caps	pair	£13.90	£16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4		£9.90	£11.88
Oil line bulkhead grommet		£5.10	£6.12
Brake servo rod bellows		£5.20	£6.24

PLEASE NOTE: All prices in Red are EXCLUSIVE OF VAT

COMMENT

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, Andrew "David Bailey" Jordan

Gordon Shedden will be making a return to the British Touring Car Championship

A QUALITY NAME FOR BTCC GRID

Just as Motorsport News closed for press last week, the British Touring Car Championship rumour mill went into overdrive. The signs were all pointing to major things happening at Team Dynamics, the multiple title-winning squad owned and operated by racer Matt Neal, himself a three-time champion.

And so it has come to pass: Dan Cammish has been axed from the line-up despite having signed a two-year deal at the end of 2019, and three-time champion Gordon Shedden is back. There has been no news on the second seat as yet – that's certainly true as MN was closing for press, but things could well change – but it seems that Neal's tenure in the cockpit in the BTCC, which stretches back to 1991, is likely to be at an end.

That is something that Neal had rumoured during the course of 2020 and was printed in the pages of MN. He was questioning himself as to whether he was actually enjoying racing anymore. With the driver shuffles that are still likely to play out, it seems the answer he arrived at was no.

The big headline about the rejig is that Gordon Shedden is back. The Scot, who left Team Dynamics to chase a chance in the FIA WTCR series in 2018, left a big hole in the British Touring Car Championship line-up. There is no question about his speed, his overtaking prowess and his ability to put a title campaign together.

It was painful to watch his struggles on the global stage, and he told MN in 2019 that there were several reasons behind it, most of which it was not prudent to make public. Shedden's ability is established, so there were obviously some pretty big problems. Now, after a year on the sidelines, the Fife flier is back, and the men who expect to be at the front of this season's grid will now be looking over their shoulders. The BTCC will be all the better for it.

Of course, Shedden's return means that there is no room for Cammish, and it is very hard not to feel sorry for the two-time Porsche king. He had done nothing wrong in his three-year stint with Honda and came within a hair's breadth of claiming the 2019 crown after a brilliant, tenacious year. He sets out his thoughts to MN on page 26 and, as much as Shedden is welcome back, Cammish's talents will be missed. Motor racing can be a cruel mistress sometimes.

Elsewhere in this week's MN, Nick Tandy settles in to our readers' Q&A chair, we go behind the scenes at the Jordan Racing Team and speak to ousted WRC battler Esapekka Lappi. Enjoy.

Matt James
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RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Snag for Williams

Williams Racing was forced to switch plans for the reveal of its FW34B grand prix car last week after hackers derailed its hopes to launch the car using augmented reality. The team changed to an online reveal. The car features a revised livery of blue, white and yellow, which echoes the machines of the 1980s and early 1990s. Team chief Jost Capito said: "We have created a fresh new livery for the 2021 car; one that acknowledges our incredible past and retains the spirit, drive and motivation that remains at the core of Williams' DNA." Williams' driving pair is Nicholas Latifi and George Russell.

Aitken and Chadwick

Brit Jack Aitken, who took part in the Sakhir Grand Prix as a stand-in for George Russell last year, has retained his place with the Dorliton Captial-owned Williams Racing F1 team into 2021 as its reserve driver. The also team said that 22-year-old Jamie Chadwick, the inaugural W Series winner, will increase her development programme in the simulator and be "fully immersed" both trackside and at the factory at grands prix.

Ocon runs Alpine

Estaban Ocon was his first to get his hands on the new Alpine F1 car after it was launched last week. The Frenchman, who will be partnered by the fit-again Fernando Alonso for the squad's pre-season testing, completed 60 miles of running at Silverstone in the A521 machine. He said: "It was a really good fun day today. It was nice to get in the car again at a track like Silverstone as that's always special. The car felt nice to drive for the first time and we managed to get through our programme as planned." The team has also confirmed former AlphaTauri driver Daniil Kvyat as its reserve in 2021.

Haas breaks cover

Haas has revealed its updated VF-21 Formula 1 car, which will be driven by Mick Schumacher and Nikita Mazepin this year, in what the squad says will be a "transitional year" before the new rules come fully on stream. Team head Gunther Steiner said that the outfit was already focused on 2022. The Ferrari-powered machine has echoes of a Russian flag with its red, white and blue detailing. Mazepin will not race under the Russian flag after the country was banned from international sporting contests.

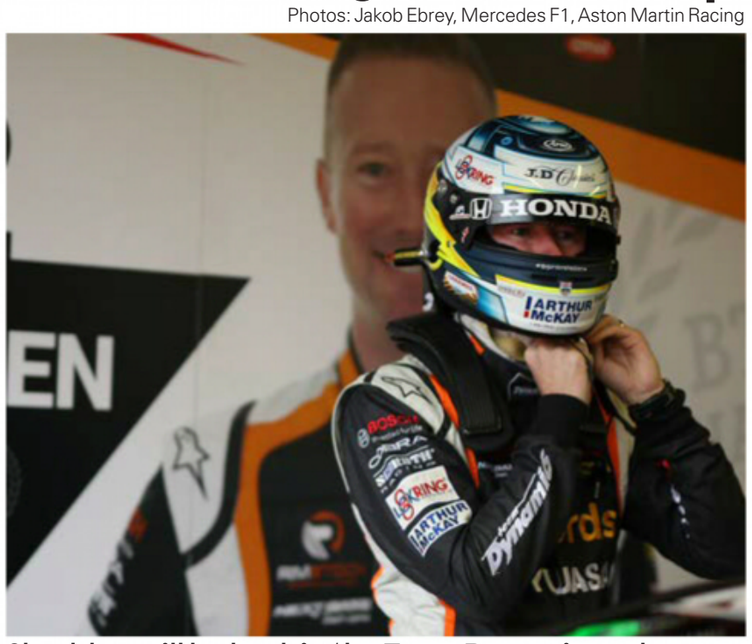
Porsche considering F1

Porsche, which is owned by the Volkswagen Audi Group, says that a switch to a greener F1 could tempt the German giant back onto the grand prix grid. The next generation of grand prix powerplant, due to be implemented in 2025, will focus more heavily on sustainability. Porsche Motorsport vice-president Fritz Enzinger, told the BBC: "Should these aspects be confirmed, we will evaluate them in detail within the VW Group and discuss further steps."

SHEDDEN EXPECTED TO HIT THE FRONT ON BRITISH TOURING CAR RETURN

Scotsman to reignite relationship in Team Dynamics ready for the 2021 BTCC showdown

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mercedes F1, Aston Martin Racing



Shedden will be back in the Team Dynamics colours

By Matt James

Team Dynamics boss Matt Neal expects new recruit Gordon Shedden to run at the very front of the British Touring Car Championship field as the three-time title winner rejoins the squad he has taken three titles with.

Shedden, 42, claimed the BTCC with Dynamics in 2012, 2015 and 2016 before taking a chance to race for Audi in the FIA WTCR championship for two seasons. He was left without a drive when Audi pulled out at the 2019 campaign but kept up his links with Team Dynamics.

When owner and racer Neal was injured in a mountain bike accident in early 2020, Shedden stepped in to conduct the early-season testing in the Honda Civic Type R FK8 alongside Dan Cammish, who has now been released by the team (*see separate story*).

Shedden, who has won 48 BTCC races, all with Dynamics, said: "I have kept in touch with the team and obviously jumped in the car early in 2020, when Matt was injured, and it felt great. That was the first time I had driven the new car and it felt right from the off.

"I've been keeping an eye on the championship, and it looks mega competitive, and my fight and determination is as high as it's ever been."

Neal said he thought Shedden would be able to deliver immediate results. "It's great to have 'Flash' back in the car, he knows the team and he knows the way we work," said Neal. "He showed last year that he hadn't lost his pace, so we are expecting great things of him, no pressure…"

While Shedden has been confirmed, the driver of the second Dynamics car has yet to be revealed, leading to speculation that Neal, a three-time champion himself, will step down from racing in the category and instead focus on running the team.

Last year, he told MN he was considering his motivation. He made his BTCC debut in 1991.

Neal told MN in October last year: "I have actually sat back and thought 'am I now reaching the end of my career?' I wanted to race in 2020 because it was my 30th year in the BTCC."

CAMMISH SEEKS OTHER DRIVES AFTER DYNAMICS BTCC SPLIT

Dan Cammish says he will pursue options outside the British Touring Car Championship in the immediate future after parting ways with Team Dynamics at the start of last week.

Despite being in the second season of a two-year deal, Cammish was told he was out of a drive. The eight-time race winner, who came within a whisker of sealing the 2019 crown, has spoken exclusively to MN about the news in a column on page 26 of this week's issue.

The two-time Porsche Carrera Cup GB winner said: "My main focus is continuing as a professional racing driver. Also, as I am 32 next birthday, I want to look at what is possible both inside and outside of racing over the next few years. I am confident things will work out and sometimes things happen for a reason."

Bosses at the Honda BTCC team said that they had made efforts to maintain Cammish drive on the grid, but outside factors had made it impossible. James Rodgers, team manager, said: "Dan is and always will be part of the Dynamics family. We have tried hard to keep Dan as part of the team for 2021, but it was not to be, and we have had to part ways."

Cammish: new aim for 2021

MOTUL TO BACK TOYOTA GAZOO RACING BRACE OF COROLLAS

Motul will adorn the two-litre turbo machines

The Speedworks Motorsport British Touring Car Championship team has unveiled a new livery for its expanded two-car attack on this year's category.

The two front-wheel-drive Toyota Gazoo Racing Corollas will be handled by Sam Smelt and Rory Butcher, and will feature support from long-time technical partner Motul for the 30-race campaign.

Team boss Christian Dick said: "Motul and [its official UK importer and distributor] Witham have been loyal partners on our journey in the BTCC as we have developed from a midfield contender into a multiple race winner and regular title challenger in recent seasons, and the outstanding performance and efficiency of Motul's products has been a key factor in that progress."

The sales director of Witham Motorsport, Richard Scarbrough, added: "We are immensely proud to have strengthened our ties with Toyota Gazoo Racing UK, and at such an exciting time for the team, too. It has been hugely rewarding to witness the vital role played by Motul lubricants in a sport in which hundredths, if not thousandths, of a second make all the difference."

F1 NEW CAR LAUNCHES

MERC WORRIED ABOUT MAINTAINING ITS PLACE AT THE FRONT OF F1

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff says he does not expect that his Formula 1 team will necessarily continue to dominate the top level of motorsport after the launch of the new-for-2021 W12 chassis, which aims to build on its run of seven world titles.

Rules changes over the winter mean the Brackley-based squad has worked hard on regaining the downforce lost now there are alterations to the floor sections of the car, a move that was made to cut back the cornering speeds of the machines.

This year's new machine will be driven by Valtteri Bottas and reigning champion Lewis Hamilton, who is gunning for a record-breaking eighth World drivers' championship.

Wolff said: "You can never rest on your laurels. The last few years were tremendous and we're very proud of that, but it all starts from zero, with equal opportunities, and so we need to not look too far ahead.

"Within the team, all of us together, we never have these expectations. There is always a scepticism as to whether we have done a good enough job over the winter. We know that if we don't push ourselves every day we might fall back and the sheer thought is scary."

Mercedes' technical director James Allison said that some of the secrets of the W12 were not on show when the car was launched last week.

Hamilton, who signed a one-year contract extension with the team recently, said if he made history this year, be might still remain in the grand prix racing.

The new Mercedes W12 Formula 1 car

"If all you're going for is accolades, I feel I could potentially lose my way," said the Briton. "Of course it is the ultimate dream but I don't think it is going to be the deciding factor whether I stay or keep going, it is more whether I still have the smile when I leave the garage.

"It is going back to: 'Do you enjoy it?'"

VETTEL EXPECTS TO WAIT FOR ULTIMATE PACE FROM ASTON MARTIN

Sebastian Vettel says his new Aston Martin team is on the beginning of its path to reach the top of grand prix racing.

Speaking at the launch of the AMR21 last week the former Ferrari driver said that the squad, which has been rebranded from the origins of the Racing Point outfit, would take its time to reach the summit. The German said: "It is a journey everyone is excited to embark on, but we are not expecting to arrive tomorrow. If we do, I don't think anybody minds. It's not going to be easy.

"I am not happy with [my driving] last year in terms of performance – partly my performance – but I accepted it."

The team has used development tokens to refine what was a race-winning car in 2020. Alongside alterations to the front wing, there has also been work on the monocoque. The cars that will be driven by Vettel and Lance Stroll.

Vettel acknowledges that Aston now has a journey

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Photo: Marc Bow, Jakob Ebrey

Eaton and Mutch to pair in Praga

W SERIES STAR EATON TO RACE NEW PRAGA IN BRITCAR CONTEST

The Grand Tour's test driver is the latest to join Praga's five-car 2021 guest line-up and will pair with Romain Grosjean's esports protege and Ginetta race-winner Gordie Mutch

By Graham Keilloh

W Series driver and *The Grand Tour* tester Abbie Eaton will race the new Praga R1 prototype in 2021's Britcar endurance championship as the latest in its five-car guest line-up.

Eaton won the MX-5 Supercup championship in 2014 and since has raced in a variety of categories including British GT plus is due to race in this year's W Series campaign.

She will pair in the Praga with Gordie Mutch, who won Ginetta GT5 Challenge races last year and is a member of Praga ambassador Romain Grosjean's R8G esports team. Mutch will complete the entire season while Eaton will appear when W Series commitments do not clash.

Eaton and Mutch join ex-SAS adventurer Jay Morton, supercar influencer Mr JWW, sim racer Jimmy Broadbent, ex LMP3 and Ginetta GT5 competitor Charlie Martin, 2020 Britcar challenger Jack Fabby and Miles Lacey on Praga's 2021 guest driver programme. One further member of the programme is to be announced.

Eaton said: "I had the chance to test the car at Donington at the end of 2020 and it is just an incredible car to drive. Racing in a grid of 10 R1s is going to be quite an experience."

The updgraded-for-2021 R1s will race in a dedicated Praga category on an anticipated largest-ever Britcar grid this year, ahead of the Praga getting its own category in 2022.

W Series racer Eaton called the new R1 "incredible"

All-disabled Team Brit has confirmed its Britcar attack

TEAM BRIT CONFIRMS BRITCAR DRIVER LINE-UP

The all-disabled Team Brit squad has announced its 2021 driver line-up with it again fielding six drivers in the Britcar championship.

The team, which aims to be the first-ever British all-disabled team to race at Le Mans, supports people with physical and psychological challenges in accessing motorsport.

Bobby Trundley, a 21-year-old multiple karting champion with severe autism, returns to the team's Britcar endurance Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4 line-up, and is joined by paraplegic Aaron Morgan, 30, who raced alongside Trundley for part of last season.

In Britcar Trophy its Class 1 BMW M240i is piloted by 24-year-old Matty Street, who has Asperger's, dyspraxia and dyslexia, and 31-year-old Andrew Tucker, who sustained extensive injuries when hit by a car on his motorbike. Its Class 4 BMW 118i is driven 38-year-old Nerys Pearce, whose treatment after being knocked from her motorbike led to paralysis from the chest down, and 31-year-old Luke Pound who was left with no movement in his left hand and very little in his left arm after a motorbike accident.

MINI CHALLENGE COOPERS GET CAPACITY GRID

The Mini Challenge has a capacity 36-car entry signed up for its Cooper class this season as it enters its second year supporting the British Touring Car Championship.

Reigning Cooper champion Harry Nunn returns to the category alongside 2020's close runner up Dominic Wheatley. Youngster Josh Porter, who finished fourth in 2020's standings, also returns.

New faces in the championship include the top two from last year's Junior Saloon Car Championship, twice champion Lewis Saunders plus his rival Alex Solley, as well as reigning Mazda MX-5 champion Joe Wiggin. Three of the seven Cooper meetings in 2021 support BTCC.

Championship director Antony Williams told Motorsport News: "The Cooper class has a special place in my heart having been the place where I personally raced in 2008 followed by my wife [Justina] in 2010, so to now see it having grown from half a dozen cars to 36 entries during my tenure is quite incredible."

Mini Challenge's Cooper class has a full turnout

IN BRIEF

BARC dates

The British Automobile Racing Club has confirmed its Silverstone Britcar event will move from March 27-28 to April 24-25 in line with the UK government's roadmap for relaxing Covid restrictions. BARC also has cancelled its April 10 Croft event, with the C1s and Mini Se7ens rearranged, and remains in talks about its April 10-11 Brands Hatch truck meeting.

Rewriting the rules

Motorsport UK is seeking members' views for simplifying and modernising existing regulations, to make them more accessible and ensure compatibility with inclusion and diversity commitments. It aims to implement the changes from the start of 2023. A survey has been mailed to licence holders together with an email address via which to send more detailed feedback.

Steller trio

Steller Motorsport could field three Audis across British GT's GT3 and GT4 classes this year. The squad graduated to GT3 from GT4 last year and has indicated ambitions to in 2021 also enter two R8 LMS GT4s, with which it won races in 2019. "I'd be delighted to hear from anyone that wants to hear more," said boss Gary Blackham.

Nothing in name

British GT squad Team Rocket RJN's dropping of 'Jenson' from its name since last season does not reflect any team structure change. The squad, co-owned by Jenson Button, told Motorsport News it had always planned to make this alteration, for simplicity and to open opportunities to add a title partner to the name.

Quinn is in

British rising star Alex Quinn will remain with Arden Motorsport in the newly merged Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine this year. The former Formula 4 pilot raced with Arden in Renault Eurocup last year, initially on a round-by-round basis, and won at Spa on the way to fourth in the standings.

Champion at Brands

Formula 1 World champion Jacques Villeneuve is set to return to Brands Hatch's American SpeedFest event on July 3-4 this year following confirmation he will complete a third NASCAR Whelen Euro Series season in 2021. He will race for fellow former F1 driver Alex Caffi in a joint venture between Academy Motorsport and Alex Caffi Motorsport.

Lewis returns to his racing roots in Se7ens

National racing legend Jonathan Lewis will return to the Mini Se7en championship this season, 41 years after he first claimed the title.

The 60-year-old, who celebrated his landmark birthday last week, decided to contest the full series in a newly built car, which will be fitted with a KAD-tuned engine. Lewis's Snetterton Speed Shop prepares a host of competition Minis, and he has raced in various historic categories over the past few seasons. Now, though, he is planning his Se7ens return.

Lewis said he was tempted back by the level playing field. "I want to know that I can go out and have a fair fight: whoever wins, I can then go and shake their hand," he said. "The good thing about Mini Se7ens is that the car weight includes the driver, which will be to my benefit!"

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RACING NEWS

RISING PORSCHE STAR KING TO DEFEND CARRERA GB TITLE

The 20-year-old junior for the German marque wants an even stronger 2021 Carrera Cup campaign as he aims for a Formula 1-supporting Porsche Supercup future

King crowned Carrera champ

Photo: Porsche GB, Jakob Ebrey

King is back for more after taking a dominant 2020 title

By Graham Keilloh

Rising star Harry King will return to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season with Team Parker Racing to defend the title he won in crushing fashion last year.

The 20-year-old graduated to the Carerra Cup in 2020 with Team Parker having become a Porsche GB Junior on the back of winning 2019's Ginetta GT4 Supercup title. King then in his debut Carrera Cup campaign took 12 victories from 16 races, and secured pole position for every round bar one.

This year King is aiming for an even stronger Carrera Cup campaign as he plots his eventual path to the Formula 1-supporting Porsche Supercup. Team Parker makes its full-time debut in that category this season.

King said: "To win the title in such record-breaking fashion last year was fantastic, but this is a new season and we are all starting from zero again. My goal is to get the maximum we can from every race – which wasn't always possible last year with three retirements for reasons that were simply out of our control.

"I know that there is still room for improvement and that I'm still learning all the time. It is no secret that my goal is to progress to the Porsche Supercup in future, so it is important for me to work hard and keep improving."

MSV RACE EVENTS' SPECTATOR RETURN SET FOR SPRING

Spectators are set to be admitted to most MotorSport Vision meetings from mid-April with door opening for elite events such as the British Touring Car Championship due a month later.

MSV, which operates Brands Hatch, Oulton Park, Donington Park, Snetterton and Cadwell Park, has outlined its resumption timetable following from last month's unveiled government roadmap for easing Covid-related lockdown restrictions in England.

Spectators can attend non-elite MSV race events from Saturday April 17, though elite motorsport will remain behind closed doors until at least May 17.

MSV added that for elite events it is urgently clarifying with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what capacity limit will apply and, depending on these discussions, BTCC events due for this stage could be rescheduled. MSV also will in due course provide an update on the Snetterton BTCC meeting scheduled for May 15-16.

Ticket sales for all events will be limited and for now must be purchased in advance, plus a range of physical distancing measures will be in place across sites. Access to working areas, such as the paddock, will be only for competitors, officials, marshals and those providing an event service.

General testing and trackdays will resume across MSV circuits from March 29.

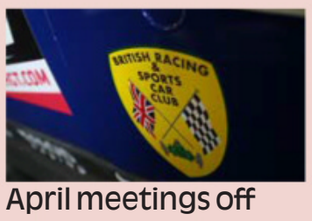
Prolific circuit operator MSV has dates for fan return

BRSCC POSTPONES APRIL MEETINGS

The British Racing and Sports Car Club has postponed its two scheduled April race meetings amid concerns about the impact on entries from continuing Covid lockdown restrictions.

The meetings were slated for Cadwell Park and Snetterton over the April 10-11 weekend; the club now is working to reschedule at the same venues. As Motorsport News went to press BRSCC was hoping to confirm new dates this week and has confirmed competitors will have the same number of championship rounds, commercial teams will not lose work plus circuits will have the same revenue.

Competitor concern included pre-April 12 rules for overnight accommodation and travel, with Cadwell and Snetterton not being centrally located, and that new competitors would not be able to complete ARDS testing before April 12 and therefore would have to miss the opening round.



April meetings off

BRSCC chairman Peter Daly told MN: "As a club we were not in a position to run those meetings effectively, [there was] concern about potential low entries and, with Covid, the interpretation of the rules.

"Two of our larger championships were not in favour of the race meetings happening because of their competitors having to travel. Their competitors were feeding back and were borderline 50-50 when it came to competitors that did want to race and didn't."

FF1600 AND BMW CHAMPION ROBERTS MAKES GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP SWITCH

Formula Ford and BMW champion Steve Roberts will make his Ginetta GT4 Supercup debut this season with reigning champion team Rob Boston Racing.

Roberts was 2004's North West FF1600 champion plus UK FF1600 scholarship class champion the following year. After a competition break, he returned in the BMW Compact Cup and was champion in 2013 and '15.

Most recently Roberts has been a Mazda MX-5 Supercup multiple race-winner with RBR. Last year he tested a GT4 Supercup Ginetta G55 with the team and now makes his Ginetta racing debut.

Roberts said: "The G55 is such an immense car to drive, and after having had a chance to test with RBR after our time together in Mazdas, I simply knew I had to try and put a budget together to compete in the championship. I'm not getting any younger, in fact I've just turned 40, so I suppose you can see it as very self-indulgent present to myself!"

Multiple champ Roberts in Ginetta switch

Gray in at Fortec

KART STAR GRAY JOINS F4 CHAMPION FORTEC

Karting graduate Oliver Gray will race in British Formula 4 this season for reigning champion Fortec Motorsport.

The Surrey 15-year-old has multiple British karting titles, vice-champion honours in 2019's IAME Euro Series plus took all heats and final victory in 2020's WSK Euro Series in Sarno.

Fortec took Luke Browning to 2020's F4 drivers' title, becoming the first team to beat Carlin to that championship.

Gray said: "I recognise I've a lot to learn in single-seaters but I'm confident I can learn quickly and together we can go for the championship again. After a few days' testing we are progressing quickly."

IN BRIEF

Elite teen duo

Teenage pair Tom Emson and Josh Rattican, joined ultimately by a third entry, will race for Elite Motorsport in this year's Ginetta GT4 Supercup. Emson returns to the Supercup with Elite having come third in the Pro-Am table last year despite not running in the class in the first three races. Rattican meanwhile finished runner-up to Elite's Tom Lebbon in Ginetta Juniors.

Lines back

Reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup Am class champion Stewart Lines will remain in the championship this season, albeit switching teams to Rob Boston Racing. The British Touring Car Championship, TCR UK and VW Racing Cup veteran stepped into Supercup last year with Triple M Motorsport and took 16 class podium finishes from 19 races.

Marshall's plan

Joe Marshall will return to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this year, switching to Team Hard for his second season in the category. The Mazda MX-5 Super Series multiple race winner made his Ginetta debut last season with Rob Boston Racing and placed sixth in the championship. After a 2020 part-campaign, Team Hard is making a full-time return to GT4 Supercup in 2021.

RALLY NEWS

BREEN TO GET TARMAC MILEAGE

Irishman Craig Breen will get some Tarmac running time in Italy this weekend.

He joins factory Hyundai WRC team-mate Thierry Neuville on the entry for Rally il Ciocco e Valle del Serchio, the opening round of the Italian championship.

The Tuscan event covers 10 stages over 58.04 miles and begins with a live-on-TV test on Friday evening with the remaining action on Saturday, including some that uses sections of former Rallye Sanremo stages.

Irishman Breen and Neuville, from Belgium, are entered in a pair of Hyundai i20 R5s with Neuville getting the chance to build his experience with new co-driver Martijn Wydaeghe on asphalt ahead of next month's sealed-surface Croatia Rally.

Breen took part on the event in 2019 and finished fourth in a Skoda Fabia R5 alongside regular co-driver Paul Nagle.

Breen will get Tuscan run

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Hyundai Motorsport

Red Bull was the backer of Ogier's M-Sport push in 2017-18

Fourmaux is vital for the future plans

FRESH BACKING TO BOOST M-SPORT AS IT LOOKS AHEAD

Red Bull support for the British WRC team will assist future Rally1 programme

By Graham Lister

Red Bull's return to M-Sport as a team backer will help the British squad "come out fighting" when the new Rally1 era begins in 2022.

The energy drink giant helped to fund Sebastien Ogier's two-year tenure at M-Sport between 2017 and 2018 when the Frenchman took a world title double.

Ahead of last month's Arctic Rally Finland, M-Sport confirmed it had secured Red Bull's support to fast-track its French WRC2 driver, Adrien Fourmaux, into one of its Ford Fiesta WRCs on April's Croatia Rally.

But the support will extend further, with Red Bull effectively supporting Fourmaux's full WRC2 campaign and selected starts in a Fiesta WRC. And he's already being touted as a full-time member of M-Sport's Rally1 line-up in 2022, such is the potential he's showing.

"Red Bull sees the same potential in Adrien as we do, and it's fantastic to welcome them back," Malcolm Wilson, the M-Sport chief, said. "We have achieved some truly incredible performances with Red Bull, and my hope is to see the team replicate those performances as we target a return to the top of the podium.

"This is the first step in an effort towards coming out fighting with the new regulations," Wilson continued. "A lot of our resources are going into ensuring we have the best possible package going into 2022. To have Red Bull onboard this year is a huge positive for the team. Not only do they believe we have a future star amongst our ranks, but they also have faith in our world-class designers and engineers to deliver another rally-winning car."

M-Sport's Rally1 challenger could be given its initial try-out this month following the delivery of the hybrid kit to teams.

Meanwhile, Nikolay Gryazin, who tested an M-Sport Fiesta WRC last month, has also attracted Red Bull support.

LATVIA HAS A "REAL" CHANCE OF INCLUSION ON 2021 WRC LINE-UP

Latvia's hopes of hosting a round of the World Rally Championship round this year appear to have increased.

Raimonds Strokss, the boss of Rally Liepaja, one of six WRC reserve events for 2021, told the Go4Speed.lv Sports Studio podcast that Latvia's chances are "even more real than ever".

It follows suggestions in the Baltic state that its flagship rally is being readied as back up for the Safari Rally should the Kenyan event not go ahead in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic. However, it would stick to its planned July 1-3 date, rather than moving a week earlier to fill the Safari's slot, when it would combine with the existing European Rally Championship round.

Strokss explained that he's in regular contact with WRC Promoter, adding: "WRC in Latvia is not over and is open. In fact, maybe even more real than ever."

The ex-driver, who created Rally Liepaja from scratch as a new ERC round in 2013, told Motorsport News last August that his event was "really close" to joining the World championship as a combined event with the ERC in 2020.

"We have an extremely good relationship with the WRC organiser and the fact that we are on the official list as a back-up is a good sign," said Strokss. "Working on the ERC rally, we are building these two ERC rally days so that if we come to the WRC, then these two days are ready for us, and we have to build the third day for the WRC.

"Last year, when the opportunity arose that we could host the WRC, we would have 30 days to build a new rally. If we are given the opportunity now, we will be able to do it better, more adequately.

"At that time, we had a Covid protocol for the ERC rally, which we had to go through. It was a good school, and now we are ready for that situation."

If Rally Liepaja did land an early July date it would be the first in a trio of high-speed gravel events taking place during a six-week window. Rally Estonia is set to follow two weeks later with Rally Finland scheduled two weeks after that.

However, preparations for the first WRC-counting Safari Rally since 2002 continued last week when the layout for the service park in Naivasha was approved during a site visit overseen by FIA steward and former Rally GB clerk of the course Iain Campbell.

The Latvian event bosses are hopeful of 2021 WRC slot

WRAPS COME OFF NEW EKSTROM-INSPIRED RALLY2 AUDI A1

Mattias Ekstrom's take on a Rally2 Kit car, an Audi A1 quattro, has broken cover.

From the EKS JC team in Sweden in partnership with South African firm Rally Technic, the Ekstrom version is one of several Audi A1 quattros built using the Oreca upgrade kit of parts in accordance with the Rally2 Kit (previously known as R4 Kit). Other examples have surfaced in Austria and France.

It uses four-wheel drive and a 1.6-litre Peugeot-derived engine producing 263bhp.

Emil Bergkvist, a European and World Junior champion who also co-drove Ekstorm in a Scoda Fabia on last month's Arctic Rally Finland, has been recruited as development driver.

"When the new generation of Audi A1 was launched, we knew we want to build something out of it," said Ekstrom. "And since everyone knows my passion for rallying, it quickly became clear that we will build a rally car."

EKS JC plans to enter the car on selected national and international events in 2021. Although Rally2 Kit cars can be used on WRC events, they are not eligible for points in WRC2 or WRC3, which are for Rally2 (previously R5) cars only. While they can compete for ERC2 points this year – as at least three Rally2 Kit-spec Suzukis will do – they will only be able to chase overall points in 2022 following a change of rules in response to the initial slow interest the category.

Other Rally2 Kit cars running in national championships in Europe include a Dacia Sandero and a Fiat 500.

This A1 is the EKS JC take on the Rally2 Kit car regulations

LINKS FORMED BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND WORLD RALLY CONTESTS

The European and World championships will be officially aligned for the first time through the FIA's new Rally Sporting Pyramid.

Approved by the World Motor Sport Council last week, the new-for-2022 structure explains the steps drivers can take from national level to the top of the WRC with options to reach the summit of the ERC instead. The FIA even went as far as describing the ERC as a "goal in itself" for drivers, something it has never officially done.

Under the new structure, ERC and WRC2 will be for Rally2 cars, ERC3 and WRC3 will be for Rally3 cars with ERC4 for Rally4 and Rally5 cars. WRC is for the new hybrid-era Rally1 cars but there will be no WRC title for two-wheel-drive cars for the first time since 2001.

ERC3, ERC4 and WRC3 will get Junior and Open categories based on driver age. There will be a Rookie award in ERC and WRC for a driver with fewer than three starts in either championship they plan to contest. A Masters award will go to over 40s who don't appear on the FIA Priority List of drivers. The WMSC also signed off the Rally1 regulations.

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- 1965 Falcon Shells Mk2 Competition
- 1989 FIA Lister-Chevrolet 'Knobbly' Sanction II 'Centenary' Sports Racer
- 1967 FIA Mini Cooper 1293S
- 1960 FIA Lotus 19 Monte Carlo
- 1966 Ford Cortina GT (Mk1) Four-Door Rally Car (LHD)
- 1965 Ford Falcon Race Car · Offered directly from Rowan Atkinson CBE
- 1966 Ford Lotus Cortina (FIA)
- 1965 Ford Mustang 289 Sport Coupe (Notchback) Race Car
- 1986 Ford Sierra 3-Door Thunder Saloon
- 1967 Ginetta G12 Sports Prototype FIA
- 1950 HWM Alta Jaguar
- 2000 Lotus Elise Race Car
- 1971 Lotus Elan Sprint · FIA
- 1960 Lotus Elite Race Car with Tow Car and Trailer
- 1960 Lotus Elite Type 14 Series 1 and Trailer
- 1955 Lotus MkVI (#60) Ex-Sir John Whitmore
- 1965 Ford Mustang Notchback 289ci Historic Touring/Road Car
- 1961 Lotus Type 20/22 Formula Junior
- 1972 Mazda RX3 Race Car
- 2017 Morgan AR V6 Championship Winning Race Car
- 2004 Palmer Jaguar JP1 TS and Trailer
- 1975 Porsche 911 Carrera MFI Safari Rally Car
- 1977 Porsche 911 RS Lightweight Replica Fast Road/Competition Car
- 1986 Porsche 944 Turbo Cup
- 1987 Sierra RS500 Cosworth Group A Touring Car
- 1959 Studebaker Silver Hawk Racer
- 1965 Sunbeam Tiger FIA Appendix 'K' Competition GT
- 1966 Tifosi Sebring Sprite (MG Midget MkII)
- 1975 Triumph Dolomite Sprint – FIA – GP2
- 1964 Triumph Spitfire Le Mans GT Fastback
- The Gerry Marshall Collection – A significant collection of trophies and automobilia owned by the late Gerry Marshall will be offered for sale on Saturday 27th March at 10am.

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RALLY NEWS

WRC could boost Ireland

RALLY NI PROMOTER SEES UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN IRISH TARMAC SERIES

Staging the WRC in Northern Ireland next year would help "kickstart" the Irish Tarmac Championship according to the man trying to bring the WRC back to the country for the first time since 2009.

The Irish Tarmac Championship has experienced something of a renaissance in recent years, which has been driven by a rule change six seasons ago that placed the emphasis on R5s instead of World Rally Cars. Pre-Covid, rounds of the cross-border series were experiencing record-breaking entry numbers as many former World Rally Car exponents switched allegiance to the newer, more cost-friendly formula. As many as 26 R5 and S2000 cars started the 2019 Galway International for example.

However, Rally Northern Ireland promoter Bobby Willis believes there is scope for improvement. "The Irish Tarmac Championship is one of the most untapped opportunities I believe there is," he said on the Stage By Stage live show.

"If we can get the World Rally Championship to Ireland, that might help kickstart something better. I see real opportunity with the Irish Tarmac Championship. The rallies are there, the competitors are there – but we just need everything to merge."

McERLEAN NAMED AS ONE OF HYUNDAI'S JUNIOR DRIVERS

Irishman, 21, joins Oliver Solberg, Jari Huttunen and others on Hyundai's roster

Photos: Hyundai, Jakob Ebrey

McErlean (r) has a Hyundai deal

By Luke Barry

Josh McErlean has described the news that he will be an official Hyundai Junior driver in 2021 as "surreal" as he now looks to make a full-time career out of rallying.

Ever since winning the 2019 Junior British Rally Championship title – becoming the first man to win the series a round early – McErlean's career has flourished.

Last year, the 21-year-old was supposed to commit to a full British Rally Championship campaign but ended up doing two European Rally Championship rallies and even a World Rally Championship event as Covid-19 altered plans.

McErlean and co-driver Keaton Williams's efforts have been recognised with a place in Hyundai's Junior driver programme that includes recent WRC debutant Oliver Solberg, 2C Competition WRC driver Pierre-Louis Loubet, WRC3 champion Jari Huttunen and his current WRC2 team-mate Ole Christian Veiby.

"It's obviously a big deal," McErlean told MN. "To get the backing of the World title-winning manufacturer is quite surreal. Obviously, there's been a lot of hard work from Motorsport Ireland and the Rally Academy to get to this point. It shows you that the hard work is starting to pay off. It's what we needed to keep on progressing at the moment. We're here to make a career out of it and we have to put all our eggs in the one basket and go for it.

"To even get copied into these emails with Andrea Adamo it's like 'now this is getting very real'," McErlean added. "We had a lot of good support from Hyundai last year, it's probably going to be much of the same but now with an official status as such. You're going to get first-hand information from the actual time, you're going to be there and be there for the opportunities that may arise. It's about being in this circle and keeping in it."

McErlean is unsure where he'll be competing this year. "If I told you a firm answer I'd be lying, because I don't know," he said. "But our hopes are to be in Azores at the first round of the European championship. After that I'm not sure what the plan is, it may be selected rallies, it may be sticking to one championship, I'm not sure."

Manx National Rally has proved to be the most popular

MANX NATIONAL VOTED BEST UK EVENT IN ONLINE POLL

The Manx National Rally has been voted as the most popular event in the UK in a recent poll on video provider Special Stage Rally Review's social media channels.

The top five was flooded with asphalt events as the Mull Rally came second – just one vote shy of the top spot – ahead of the Jim Clark Rally, with the Manx International fifth behind the Roger Albert Clark Rally. The Malcolm Wilson Rally, Nicky Grist Stages, Speyside Stages, Trackrod Rally Yorkshire and North West Stages completed the top 10.

The vote followed a similar one on the most entertaining drivers in the UK, where 2000 and 2003 BTRDA Gold Star champion Andy Burton – famed for piloting a Peugeot 306 Cosworth – defeated Frank Kelly.

Special Stage boss Wayne Goldring told MN: "I don't think the results of any have been too much of a surprise. Andy Burton winning the drivers one was always going to happen, and Mull and Manx fighting for the best event is an obvious choice when you look at it, they are two iconic events that you would expect to be top of the list. At the moment I am still trying to decide what else would make a good top 10."

ULSTER BOSSES EAGER TO RUN AND GIVE DRIVERS A REPRIEVE

Ulster Rally organisers have said they are keen to hold the event on November 19-20 this year "to see people back doing the things that they love".

Based once again out of Newry city, it will be open to homologated, historic and modified rally cars.

The decision to push ahead with plans was confirmed recently by event director, Richard Swanston, as the Covid vaccination programme gathers momentum.

"I want to see people back doing the things that they love," Swanston told MN.

"As organisers, we appreciate that this will take time – and expect that things may not be exactly the same – but the key is that people can enjoy themselves, be they the volunteers running the event, the competitors or the spectators.

"Of course, cancelling would be easy, but if we didn't like a challenge, we would never run any events. We will be monitoring the situation from now right up until the event and will be following all available guidance to keep everyone safe.

"If at any time the risk becomes too great – or government guidance dictates otherwise – then we will have to cancel," continued Swanston. "Planning and preparations for the Ulster Rally begin in earnest around eight months in advance, so we have to start now. We hope the world's in a better place by November so that we can run the rally as planned."

A number of leading drivers have welcomed the announcement, including Desi Henry who finished second overall back in 2015. "It is great to hear the Ulster Rally plans to run in November," said Henry. "From an organisational point of view it is smart as the vaccination programme should be well under control by that stage, which should mean there is less chance of the event ending up being cancelled.

"Many other sports have started back, or are planning to start back once the restrictions are lifted, so I think it's important for motorsport to follow suit. For me, rallying is a sport but for many other people it's their job and their livelihood so it's important to get things moving from that point of view. I certainly look forward to getting back at it."

Plans are underway to host the Ulster Rally in November

Photos: Chicane Media

The Cadwell Park MNCRC meeting has been axed

CADWELL PARK DOUBLE HEADER CANCELLED

Motorsport News series hits the buffers due to the Covid restrictions

By Luke Barry

The Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship season has been dealt another blow with the cancellation of the Cadwell Park double-header on April 3-4.

The Alan Healy Memorial Stages and Cirrus Research Stages were set to be held back-to-back as rounds two and three – a series first – but were cancelled last Friday because of issues with dual occupancy in a competing vehicle.

In a series statement, championship organisers said they were "understandably disappointed by the decision but due to the ever-changing situation we have regrettably had to take this decision."

Discussions with relevant stakeholders are now ongoing to reschedule the two Cadwell Park events, and plans are in place for the remaining rounds of the series to run. The projected restart will be in April for the SMC Stages at Anglesey, which will be followed by the Lee Holland Stages also at Anglesey.

The Snetterton Stages and Neil Howard Stages (Oulton Park) also remain on the schedule but the dates are to be confirmed. Only the Dukeries Rally (Donington Park) has taken part so far this season, on December 6.

KARTING LAUNCHPAD UNDER THREAT FROM PLANNERS

The future of Buckmore Park will be put at risk if plans to turn part of its paddock into a storage facility are rejected, bosses say.

The owners of the Kent kart track say the pandemic "continues to threaten the long-term survival" of the kart circuit, which helped launch the careers of Lewis Hamilton, Jenson Button and Johnny Herbert.

They have submitted plans to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council that, if approved, will mean a distribution facility opens on the existing paddock. In the planning application, DHA Planning – a consultancy firm working on behalf of the circuit – says: "The proposed use will help bring about much-needed income for the business, without which the historic kart circuit will struggle to continue to operate when any 'normal' business resumes, whenever that may be.

"The proposals are for the use of land surplus to the requirements of the circuit and will not affect its operation in the event that a viable business can recommence."

As part of the plan, 43 parking spaces will be retained "to ensure demand is more than met on the busiest days of the year".

The track was bought by John Surtees in 2015 (*below*) and is run by his daughter, Leonora.

COLEY TO COMMENTATE ON EXTREME E TV BROADCASTS

World RX commentator Andrew Coley will head up the all-electric Extreme E series' broadcast team alongside BBC F1 and Formula E reporter Jennie Gow.

While Coley and Gow will commentate on the five rounds of the 2021 season from a London studio, TV presenter Layla Anna-Lee will be the on-site anchor for the series' 20-episode magazine show call Electric Odyssey.

Coley said: "Coming from the background I do on the off-road side, this [Extreme E] ticks many boxes from a competition point of view, with a mix of rallying, rallycross and rally-raid. I'm excited to see the pace of the female drivers; motorsport is unique in allowing men and women to compete against each other on equal terms, and I expect the competition to be fierce."

Caitlin May has set sights on glory in the Junior series

TEENAGER MAY HAS JUNIOR RX TITLE AIM FOR 2021

Sixteen-year-old kart racer Caitlin May has hopes of competing at the front of the field in the Motorsport UK Junior Rallycross Championship this year, her second term of rallycross competition.

Daughter of experienced saloon car racer Rick, May made her rallycross debut at Lydden Hill last year and finished fourth and sixth in her maiden weekend in the BRX 5 Nations support category series. She had finished seventh in the BTRDA Clubmans event at the same circuit on her debut.

May will focus on the Junior RX series in 2021. She said: "Ever since I was young and watched my dad race cars it was always a dream to do that, so when I had the chance to start rallycross it was amazing. I'm looking at the bigger picture, to try and become a Supercar driver, that would be the goal."

The Tonbridge driver is receiving support from World RX-winning engineer Graham Rodemark, multiple British RX champion Julian Godfrey and engineer Scott Reed.

PHIL CHICKEN RUNS IN SUPER 1600 CITROEN AFTER SWITCHING FROM SWIFT

BRDA Rallycross champion Phil Chicken will return to the Super1600 category within the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy structure this year racing his MB Motorsport-prepared Citroen C2.

Chicken was a Super1600 regular between 2014 and 2018 and made European championship appearances alongside his domestic programmes. Last year he raced in the single-make Swift Sport championship but will return to Super1600 for 2021.

"I thoroughly enjoyed competing the Swift Sport class last season, that certainly helped me get the rallycross bug back," said Chicken.

His Super1600 Citroen had been converted to rally specification, but will now be switched back to rallycross trim. "The Swifts are a good, cheap way to have some fun but I don't have enough talent to be competitive in Swift," he said. "Seriously they just don't suit my driving style for some reason, whereas the Super1600 does."

Chicken's son Corey Padgett will continue in the 5 Nations BRX Junior series this year, along with selected BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship rounds.

Chicken back in the C2 seat

NEW NISSAN RX CAR FOR SCOTSMAN REID

Former motocross racer Graeme Reid will campaign an Estonian-built Nissan Pulsar in the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross championship this season.

Reid gave his Pulsar its debut at his home Knockhill circuit last season but retired in practice with an engine failure. While looking for parts for the car online, he came across a Sven Oras-owned Pulsar rallycross machine in Estonia and subsequently bought the car.

He had it transported to Birmingham from Estonia, before it was taken to his Scotland workshops. He explained: "I'm still in regular contact with Sven and we hope to meet in person at some point.

"I'm running a standard gearbox for now to allow me to get seat time and get used to left-hand drive. I have upgraded the brakes done a lot to the car to improve it."

The four-wheel-drive machine that Reid will race in the BTRDA Clubman 4x4 [Supercar] category produces around 500bhp. He added: "I'm doing testing when I can and I've committed to BTRDA this year, but the first round isn't until August for my class. I would also like to race in the Knockhill round of the British championship if possible to see how I get on."

Reid has a new Pulsar racer

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE WORKSHOP

F2 TOLEMAN TG280

Current owner: Mark Harrison

The ex-Warwick F2 car

It's a 1980 Formula 2 car

The BP-liveried Toleman TG280 raced by Derek Warwick in the 1980 European Formula 2 Championship will race once more than season as Mark Harrison has rebuilt it ready for the new Geoff Lees Trophy for 1980s single-seaters.

It was later sold to Europe

Chassis TG280-02 took Warwick to second in the championship as team-mate Brian Henton won the 1980 F2 crown. At the end of the season, the Toleman team headed to Formula 1 and the cars were sold, with Warwick's going to an Austrian privateer. After a season or two on the fringes of F2 it was sold to Hungary where it was used on the hills.

Harrison takes up the story

Mark Harrison says: "It then spent most of its life in Eastern Europe. It had quite a hard life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The Hart engine it ran in period was not a stressed member of the chassis and in Eastern Europe it ended up with a BMW engine, which does work as a stressed member. So quite a bit was changed. It came back to the UK as a rolling chassis and then had a Rover V8 engine installed."

It's now been restored

"It finally came back to the UK in around 2007. I had two other TG280s at one point and offered to help the guy who had it. But I ended up buying it in 2013 and did nothing with it for a while," says Harrison.

He used another chassis as a guide

"We stripped it down and set about rebuilding it," adds Harrison. "Luckily, I had another one that we could use as a guide. There were probably about 10 cars built in period and Lola also built some under licence. I've now sold my other car, which I had run at Shelsley Walsh."

It's ready to race again

"I don't think it has raced since the end of 1982. We got it finished in time for Derek Warwick to drive it at Silverstone for a magazine feature in September. It ran OK but the Hart engine is now away being refreshed. The car is absolutely as it should be now and it will soon be ready to go. I'm planning to race it at Silverstone in May for the start of the Geoff Lees Trophy," he says.

R.A.C. RALLY TO FEATURE A MIGHTY DOUBLE USE 17.6-MILE TEST

Epic biennial historic event reaches a challenging 350 stage miles for 2021

Photos: Paul Lawrence

By Paul Lawrence

More route information for the Roger Albert Clark Rally, set to take place on November 25-29, has been confirmed ahead of the longest and toughest special stage rally on the UK calendar.

The details released also confirm that the event will not return to the Yorkshire forest stages in 2021.

Carlisle will be the host city until the rally transfers to Wales on Saturday night. Rally manager Colin Heppenstall has outlined the route for the opening three days and will soon reveal his route plan for Sunday and Monday in Wales. The total route will feature 350 stage miles.

The rally will start at 1500hrs on Thursday, November 25, for a loop of five stages in the western end of Kielder forest covering 42 stage miles into the evening.

Friday is a long, challenging day in the central block of Kielder, taking in eight stages and 112 stage miles. The Bewshaugh stage, which is run twice, is a mighty 17.67 miles.

The pressure is kept up on Saturday with classic stages over the border in Scotland, including Ae, Twiglees and Craik in a route of eight stages and 66 stage miles. Crews will then re-locate to Wales for Sunday and Monday and a further 130 stage miles.

Heppenstall said: "It really is business as usual and we are planning ahead for November. We'll issue further details as more route information becomes available. We plan to open entries in April and will give plenty of notice of the opening date. We are getting an unprecedented level of enquiry from prospective competitors for the rally."

Competitors on the R.A.C. Rally will face a tough challenge and a demanding route

The HRDC battlers will visit Castle Combe in August

HRDC EXPLAINS COMBE EVENT'S AUGUST MOVE

The Historic Racing Drivers' Club has explained its decision to postpone its Castle Combe races from Easter Monday to Bank Holiday Monday, August 30.

Although racing in the UK can restart in April, HDRC boss Julius Thurgood says other government restrictions in place at the time of the planned date made it inappropriate to run the races.

Thurgood was clear about the situation: "Expecting HRDC competitors from different age groups, vaccinated or not, from wide-ranging UK destinations to travel, seek overnight accommodation and congregate in contravention of the Prime Minister's roadmap is not an option that the HRDC will condone or support in any way."

These are the HRDC races originally abandoned from the October 2020 Castle Combe Autumn Classic due to heavy rain.

The Easter Monday race meeting at the Wiltshire track will still go ahead but will only feature rounds of the circuit's local categories.

Historic Rally Festival grabs Weston date

The inaugural Historic Rally Festival will finally run on the revised date of August 21-22 with action from cars across rallying history at Weston Park.

This will be the first event of its kind in the UK, modelled on successful European events. This will be the fourth attempt to run the event, which was first planned for June 2020. Following the UK government announcements, organisation of the festival is now pushing ahead once more.

Organiser Warner Lewis said: "Finally it looks like we will be able to make the Historic Rally Festival happen this summer."

A field of 80 cars will tackle demonstration special stages on the asphalt roads of the Shropshire stately home.

Donington will open the national season

MASTERS HISTORIC RACING TO RAISE CURTAIN ON 2021

Masters Historic Racing is set to host the first race meeting of the 2021 season when it runs its two-day meeting at Donington Park on Good Friday and Easter Saturday, April 2-3.

The MotorSport Vision Racing-organised race meeting will feature a revised timetable to make it a one-day race meeting for many of the categories in light of the current limitations on hotel stays.

Although it seems unlikely that teams and drivers from mainland Europe will be able to attend, a strong entry is reported for a programme that includes Historic Formula 1, Masters Endurance Legends, Masters Historic Sports Cars and Pre '66 Touring Cars. Guest races include a double-header for Historic Formula 2.

IN BRIEF

Wendy Markey-Amey

Motorsport News was very sad to learn of the recent death of Wendy Markey-Amey. As Wendy Markey, she raced extensively in the 1970s and was best known for competing in Production Saloons, notably in a Mazda RX-3. She also later raced a Chevron B8 in historic events and served on the British Women Racing Drivers' Club committee. She started out as a ballet dancer and singer.

Barber signs off

Jazz musician Chris Barber, who died last week aged 90, was also a great motor racing enthusiast. He raced Lotus Elites in the late 1950s and 60s and later owned Elans and Lotus 47s, which he entered for other drivers, notably sportscar ace John Hine. His final racing Lotus was one of the two 62s, which he entered in the late 1960s for drivers including Dave Brodie.

Salamandre is axed

The organisers of the Salamandre Rally in Belgium have abandoned plans to run the event in April. The closed-road stage event is popular with UK crews in historic cars. The event is planned to return to the calendar in the spring of 2022.

Tour Auto's delay

The date for the French Tour Auto classic race and rally tour has been pushed back from late April to August 30-September 4. The six-day event will now take a late summer slot, starting in Paris and finishing in Nice. "We'll be back on the road for Tour Auto in September, a date which met with great success last year," said organiser Patrick Peter.

New Castellet date

The change of date for Tour Auto has allowed promoter Peter Auto to move its Dix Mille Tours du Castellet race meeting at the Paul Ricard track in southern France, postponed from March, to a new provisional date over the weekend of April 30-May 2.

Miglia retro moved

Also set for a new date is the 2021 edition of the Mille Miglia retro event in Italy, which has been rescheduled from mid-May to June 16-19. The Brescia-based will feature an anti-clockwise route with overnight stops in Viareggio, Rome and Bologna.

GTS is on the up

Equipe Classic Racing has reported heavy demand for entries for its Equipe GTS category for Appendix K pre '66 sports cars. When entries opened for the first race of the season, at Brands Hatch on April 24-25, the grid sold out in 17 minutes. The season was initially due to start at Silverstone on March 20, but the MG Car Club had to cancel the date in line with the Covid road map.

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FEATURE

NICK TANDY: ANOTHER LE MANS WIN IS IN MY SIGHTS

The 2015 La Sarthe winner tackles the readers' questions. By Matt James

Tandy has another Le Mans win on his checklist

From a background racing Minis, Nick Tandy's rise to the very top of motorsport is the stuff of fairy tales and has taken him to the richest rewards that racing has to offer.

He climbed through single-seaters too and up the Porsche racing ladder to become a mainstay of the German firm's driving roster. His outright win at Le Mans, sharing the 919 Hybrid with Nico Hulkenberg and Earl Bamber, was a sign that he had truly arrived.

But now he has branched out and joined the Corvette Racing squad, making his bow with the team in the recent 24 Hours of Daytona in Florida, a race he rates as one of his favourites on the planet.

Tandy's story has also featured some dark times when his brother Joe, a formidable racer in his own right and the founder of the JTR team that Nick still runs, was killed in a road accident in 2009. Far from derailing Nick, it galvanised him and the memory of Joe is never far from the successes he has.

He took time out of his schedule to tackle the MN readers' posers and gave each one some serious consideration.

Question: You were brought up around the short oval scene and still have a passion for it. What is it about short oval racing that you like so much?
John Charles
Via email
Nick Tandy: "My dad, Joe, raced on short ovals. He started out at Brafield and ended up doing National Hot Rods. I used to go all over the country with him. Even to this day, I enjoy the fact that the racing on the short ovals is close-quarters combat, whether it is a contact or non-contact formula. I enjoy the fact that the fastest cars usually have to start at the back. I love the short race formats and the multi-category schedule of oval racing in general: there is always something different to watch. You might have four different formulas, and they all race within 45 minutes, and then they go on repeat.

"I love the fact there are heats and a final at each meeting. I really enjoy the Saturday evening meetings under floodlights. It is a brilliant evening out, you can go with your mates and you can watch the races that you really want to watch and then you can go for a beer or walk around the pits and chat to people. It's what I grew up around."
MN: So were you always destined to do Ministox: was it almost preordained?
NT: "I am pretty sure that my brother Joe and I almost expected it would happen, really. When we were going Hot Rod racing, we were growing up with other kids whose dads raced and their elder siblings would be doing Ministox. It was just something that this group of kids ended up doing. There was

Photos: Matt Bull/racepixels.co.uk, Gary Hawkins, Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey

Tandy raced at Daytona for Corvette

Nick leads brother Joe in Ministox

Sign of things to come: trophy in '98

quite a few of us: Phil White's son, Ricky Hunn's boys and the Masons: there was loads who made the step. We just seemed to assume that this was what our lives would be. Sure, when it came to our time, we nagged and nagged and nagged our parents. We wanted to get on with it. My mother said that she didn't want us starting at 10 years old, because she thought we were too small up against big 17-year-olds. Se we had to wait until we were 11, that was agony! Joe was two years older so he got there first and I spent two years watching him. I was very ready for it by the time mum said I was old enough to get out there."

MN: Do you think there are skills you learned in short oval racing that you've taken with you all the way through your career? Do you learn things there that you wouldn't have picked up in other disciplines?

NT: "That's 100% the case. You learn so much about spatial awareness and traffic management is key on the ovals. I am sure that I feel more comfortable in an environment with many cars around me because that was always the case on the short ovals. You are always in a pack of cars and you always had to know where the corners of your car were. In all my racing, I have never been scared to be millimetres from another car or do a crossover passing move, and I am not worried about going four-wide into a corner if I have to. That's useful in all multi-class racing.

"What I also think helps is that we were racing full-sized cars from the age of 11. We weren't racing go-karts. So when you transition into a formula car or a racing saloon, you are used to dealing with the dimensions around you. It wasn't that different and you know that scale of car from the beginning."

Question: You decided to go circuit racing in Minis: that wasn't a traditional route. What prompted that switch? The natural progression would have been National Hot Rods, surely?
Barry May
Via email

NT: "The motivation was the British Touring Car Championship. We were in Ministox in the late 1990s: my brother Joe finished in 1999, and I was a bit after that. But on TV, throughout the 1990s, the thing we watched the most was the BTCC. We both wanted to be BTCC drivers."

Question: Who was the better driver: you or your brother Joe?
Jack Crowther
Via email

NT: "Tough [laughs]! I feel I had an edge on Joe from a performance point of view but he was a better mechanic and engineer and was probably a better general package. He would beat me because his all-round package was better and that was something he worked on.

"His cars were always better, whereas I was just more interested in turning up and going flat out! But take into account, I had the benefit of seeing all of his learning, because he was that little bit older than me. I was able to learn from his mistakes, and I think the younger sibling always has that advantage."

MN: So how come you guys both switched to single-seater racing? Did the BTCC dream fade away?

NT: "We both made the switch around the same time, in 2005. After racing for four years in the Mini Se7en series, it dawned on us that [our career paths] probably weren't going to happen the way that we wanted it to.

"The BTCC scene was falling away a bit from the heady days of the mid-1990s. I went single-seater racing because I had been watching these cars at meetings and I just fancied having a go in one. There was no thought about Formula 1 or professional racing: I just wanted to have a crack at it and I thought I could probably do alright in one. Joe was working for Formula Palmer Audi, so he had an 'in' there, of sorts, but he still needed to fund it, and I happened to enter the BRDC Scholarship, which was just something for me to do over the winter and have a run in a few cars. I never expected to win it, but I did and got a year in the BRDC Formula Ford championship. So it was never a conscious decision to go single-seater racing, if you like, but it all fell into place for both Joe and I. Our hands had been forced a bit though, because we had been thrown out of the Mini Se7en club…"

MN: Explain?

NT: "We had a difference of opinion to them, and I think it stemmed from a difference of background, really. I really don't think they liked us being there. So we took our toys out of their pram and went elsewhere…I look back on the Mini racing fondly, but some of the people in the club were very hard to get along with, that is the polite version."

Question: Nick, the first time I saw you race was in the Formula Palmer Audi shootout at Snetterton that late crisp cold autumnal day in 2007. It was fantastic racing and very competitive series for young talented drivers. Did this meeting kickstart your racing career and what memories do you have of FPA?
Bob Seaward
Via Facebook

NT: "That might have been the first time my name really registered with Bob, but I had been doing a lot up until that point. The background to it is interesting though. I had just won the Formula Ford Festival and we had had a great season in Formula Ford, although we didn't win the title. I was hoping to get selected for the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award young driver shortlist, primarily because I thought I would have a good chance of winning it and I wanted to go Formula 3 racing, so the connections and the prize money that came with the Autosport award would have been very beneficial. But I wasn't on the initial shortlist.

"Joe had already found a backer to move our team, JTR, into Formula 3. We looked at the situation and for a £5000 investment in racing in the Formula Palmer Audi Autumn weekend at Snetterton [which offered the winner a place in the Autosport award final], there was a chance to be in the mix for the £100,000 on offer for the young driver award and everything else that come with that award. We decided to go for it and do our best.

"That worked out for us, and that is why I entered it."

MN: So what happened in your young driver award assessment?

NT: "I think I would have won it had I not had a massive shunt in the World Series by Renault car! I had a really

continued on page 16

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FEATURE

good couple of days. I think everyone was pleased with what I was doing, the DTM team and the Porsche team. Everyone was saying good things, but I knew that Dean Smith was going pretty well too. Right at the end of the second day, they put Dean and I out at the same time in the World Series cars. The pair of us knew that it was, effectively, a shootout. Dean went out and had a massive shunt at Coram and destroyed the car. I still didn't know quite what the score was, so I thought I would go out in the car and give it my all. I wanted to give them no reason why they couldn't pick me. On my third flying lap, I put a wheel on the grass on the entry to Riches and had a massive accident of my own – so that was the end of that. I am not bitter about it though, because if I had have won that, my life would have taken a very different route."

MN sets the scene: Just two weeks after the death of his brother Joe in a road accident in 2009, Nick and the team continued their campaign in British Formula 3 with the Mygale chassis, Nick took a breakthrough win at Rockingham, and so enthusiastic were his celebrations that he broke the suspension on the slowing down lap…

Question: Winning the F3 race at Rockingham: how emotional was that? How did you even manage to drive that weekend?
Emma Facey
Via email

MN: Was that a weekend just to get through, or was there extra motivation?
NT: "I think for a lot of us, especially me and the family, the best and the easiest thing we could do to deal with what was happening was to go racing. We went to that weekend, and we had something else to think about. There wasn't any extra motivation but it was something to focus on. We were back at a race track and it was time to go racing again, so it was a nice relief from what had been going on.

"All through pre-season testing, we had been super quick at Rockingham. It was a high-downforce track and although the Mygale I was driving had a lot of drag, it had a lot of downforce too. We had been looking forward to Rockingham all season. It was a nice release from everything to go there and it was also an opportunity, because we knew we had a chance of a strong result."
MN: Did it hit you after the race then? Were you drained?
NT: "After the first race, which I won, I tried to do a 'stoppy' across the line so there would be tyre smoke and it would look spectacular, but it went too far and I broke the suspension! Race two was about three hours away and some of the suspension parts that had broken, we didn't have at the track. We had a spare chassis back in the workshop though, so as soon as the race was over, I had to get in the girlfriend's car and cane it back to HQ in Bedford, strip down the spare car and take all the bits back to the track…I only just managed it too. So it wasn't until later in the day that things started to hit me emotionally."

> **"The 919 was just an mind-blowing racing car"**
>
> **Nick Tandy**

Question: You eventually got your dream ticket with a factory Porsche drive. How did that come about? It is something any young driver would love!
James Hilton
Via email

NT: "We stopped our British Formula 3 season because the team was in trouble. The man who was supporting Joe pulled out of the squad and we didn't have the cash to go on racing. I got a drive with Volkswagen to do the F3 Euroseries in a Kolles car– they were looking for an experienced driver and I didn't have to take any money and I didn't have any other racing that was happening. It was a simple decision for me. It turned out to be a complete shower of shit. We never did any good but, on those race days, the Euroseries was with DTM and with the Carrera Cup Germany.

"I was in a hotel bar in Zandvoort with a friend from Hewland gearboxes who I knew from the F3 stuff. He was with a friend Chris Crawford who was engineering a Carrera Cup team. Us three Enlgish men in a bar in Holland: sounds like the start of a joke, doesn't it? Chris said why don't I go over the next day and he would introduce me to [Carrera Cup team owner] Franz Konrad. I thought that was a great idea because the F3 thing was so bad.

"I went to see Herr Konrad, told him who I was and told him I thought I could do a good job for him if he were to give me a chance and if he was ever in need of a driver. I told him I had done a guest drive in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB and won first time out. If you don't ask, you don't get…but I never really expected anything to really come from it but why not? He seemed interested and so I kept calling him and checking in. About a month later, he had a driver who was unable to test at Dijon the next day and so he asked me to go. I drove overnight from Bedford to Dijon and I was quick. Franz asked if I would like to do the race and I did, and I finished second. He invited me to do a Supercup round at the end of the year in Abi Dhabi, and I finished second in that too. Through the winter, he went about trying to fund a car for me in the Supercup and Carrera Cup Germany. That's how it all started."
MN: From there to a factory deal, there is still a journey though…
NT: "In the Porsche Carrera Cup in Germany, a lot of the time the presentations were done by the top people at Porsche, because you are right under their noses. You quickly get to know some very key people. The first time I was contracted by Porsche was the back end of 2010, they asked me to share a car with Nicolas Amindo and Martin Ragginger for a VLN round at the Nordschleife because Porsche was about to do the World Cup thing at the same track the following year and they wanted to check out the cars around there.

"They wanted an experienced guy, a complete rookie, which was me, and an in-between driver. They paid me to be part of it, which I thought was just fantastic. They saw I could do a good job and gave me bits and pieces after that. I went to my first Le Mans in 2011 [in a Team Felbermayr-Proton Porsche with Abdulaziz Al-Faisal and Bryce Miller] on a Porsche contract whilst I was still racing in the Carrera Cup.

"I did races in America too as part of the Porsche deal. I asked at the back end of 2011 what it was looking like and what would be the chances of a factory contract, they said there was no need but they would be in contact. I did a load more Porsche racing in 2012 and I won the Porsche Cup [for the top performing privateer driver in the German machines]. And at the back end of 2012, they asked me to be a factory driver."
MN: Did you know about the proposed LMP1 programme at that time?
NT: "I must have heard about it, obviously, but it wasn't on my radar. I knew it was a separate project. There was Porsche Motorsport which had typically been one thing – looking after racing in the American Le Mans Series or the European Le Mans Series. They all managed that from the same department, but when the LMP1 crew set up, it was a totally different department. There were different drivers, a different staff and a different crew. I wanted to be part of the Porsche Motorsport division that it was in 2012: we just race 911s. The LMP1 thing only came on my radar when Porsche announced the third car.

"I was halfway through a season racing a factory car in America and I could judge my pace against the other guys in the line-up. I thought 'well, if they are testing some of the other guys, then surely I deserve a shot too?' I sent a message to [Porsche Motorsport boss] Andreas Seidel asking if he would like me to test the car and I told him I had F3 experience so I knew about aero. He said OK, come and have a run…"
MN: So when was your first run?
NT: "It was in MotorLand Aragon in Spain. Honestly, it was just light years away from anything else I had ever driven. The power involved was just mind-blowing, especially in the days of the eight Megajoule class. Before they started restricting it, the output of that car was unbelievable.

"There was three of us new drivers, and I think we did two tests. We had two runs of eight laps each to try and get a job for life! No pressure! It was intimidating because of the speed, the grip and acceleration, but we knew we had limited time. I just went flat-out."

Question: Which is your favourite 24-hour race, and which is the hardest?
Russell Scobbie
Via email

NT: "I think my favourite event is the Nurburging 24 Hours. As an *event*, I like it. I spent a lot of time racing in Germany and I like it there: I enjoy the people and the place and I have lots of friends. The way the event is so open in terms of where people can spectate from is cool. And how the paddock is open and just the fun atmosphere that makes it stand out.

"Having said that, my favourite 24-hour race is Daytona. I like the US regulations about the safety car. It is not like Le Mans where, if get unlucky by five seconds, you can lose 90 seconds because you are in the wrong bloody safety car queue. I like the track at Daytona and the slipstreaming. It is almost a track of two halves, which makes it a challenge. You need a car that has a good balance for the infield, but everyone is trimmed out as much as possible to maximise the straightline speed – because lap time in a straight line is free..."
MN: So which is the hardest one?
NT: "The Nurburgring. There is a such a disparity in the types of car and there are so many cars on track. And the track is so easy to make a small mistake on which will then lead to some pretty massive consequences because it is so narrow and there is no runoff. There are 190 other cars out there with you with various levels of driver who could do anything at any given moment. So, the chances of something happening to you are high. On top of that, you haven't got six top-class cars like you might have at Le Mans: there are probably about 30 in that race that have a chance to win. That is the toughest one because there are so many factors and that is why I was so happy to win it in 2018."

Question: If you could share a car with anyone, who would it be?
Malcolm Munt
Via email

NT: "It would be easy to say my team-mates who I have had success with before. And it would be easy to say the team-mates that I have now. But if we go away from that, somebody that I have grown a huge deal of respect for is Rene Rast. We were sworn enemies for two years in the Porsche Supercup and Porsche Carrera Cup. We didn't like each other, we didn't get on, we were at each other's nemesis. But since then, I have grown to realise how much of a better driver he made me and probably vice versa.

"A few years later we became quite good friends. Over time, we stopped hating each other and started respecting each other. We became friends instead of enemies. He was very quick in a P1 car when he drove that. And what he has done in the DTM has been pretty unbelievable."

Question: How different is the Corvette team from Porsche? Why are you certain it is the right move for you?
Damien Doherty
Via email

NT: "I would say that the teams are very similar. The way people go about the racing and the professionalism on show is very similar, and the cars are fairly similar too. I would say the biggest difference is probably the way of working, which is different between the German way of doing things to the American way of doing things. Both have their good and bad points. I would say the US way is maybe a little bit more relaxed but it leads to success, clearly.

"Also, one of the big appeals for me ever since I started looking at sportscars, was that I knew Oliver Gavin from way back when and he came to my school when I was about six years old – we'd gone to the same school. I looked up to him and he was the guy that you want to emulate. In terms of his professionalism and his speed. At my first Le Mans, my wife took a picture of the timing screen because it had Tandy and Gavin at the top: that's one for Sharnbrook Upper School!

"Ollie was a hero and he drove for

Team Tandy: Brother Joe, left, Nick in the cockpit and father Joe, a former Hot Rod racer, on the right

Tandy was a winner at the Formula Ford Festival

Switching to a circuit attack: Tandy's track career began in Mini Se7ens

A one-off in Porsches in the UK showed his versatility

"We were set on becoming BTCC aces"

Nick Tandy

Briton Tandy (l), Bamber and Hulkenberg (r) at Le Mans, 2015

F3 Euroseries didn't go well...

Corvette Racing and it has always been a team I had looked up to and the success and the continued success it has had over the last 20 years is amazing: if they go for another 20 years, that is the sort of programme you want to be involved with."

Question: What other goals do you wish to achieve in your racing career? Any particular races or series that would keep you hungry? Is racing in NASCAR a possibility whether it is on road courses or ovals?
Mario Viloria
Via Facebook
NT: "I definitely want to win Le Mans again. At least once more. And with the LMPh and the LMH rules coming in [for the Hypercars] coming up that looks good. There might be a chance to race in the top class again. That is definitely one goal.

"And also, I have yet to win a drivers' championship since my Carrera Cup days. I have done part-season stuff and I have won teams' championships and different races, but it has always been bits and pieces. That is key goal.

"Then I would like to win Daytona outright, because then that would complete the set of all the major 24-hour races [Le Mans, Spa, Nurburgring and Daytona] that I would have won, and that would be special."
MN: What about those other championships that are out there like, say, NASCAR or Australian Supercars?
NT: "I love NASCAR and I love the racing. I know a lot about the sport and I would like to race in the series because I like the look of the way the racing is. It reminds me of the oval racing that I grew up on: short tracks, cars together all the time in a pack, etc. That appeals, but I am also aware that NASCAR is different from any other branch of motorsport and it is a niche thing to be able to get into. It is not like the times when the money was around for people like Dario Franchitti or Juan Pablo Montoya to go and do it and land a top seat. It would have to be a conscious shift away from what I am doing to go and dedicate myself to it. Maybe one day…my aim in life is to be able to earn enough money for me to go and do a season in NASCAR!

"I love V8s too, and I love the idea of the Bathurst 1000. When I was growing up and watching the Ford Sierra RS500s around there left quite an impression. It has taken my fancy. Beyond that, a series I have always had a great attraction to is British touring cars. I love the racing and I still watch it all the time. It is a British series and I haven't raced in a British series for over a decade. I miss having my friends come to watch me race and being around the British people I grew up in the paddock with. That would be something I would love to do."

Question: Is there any young driver you've run at JTR that you think would give you a run for your money?
Jon Wood
Via email
NT: "Dan Harper. The season he did when he won the Porsche Carrera Cup GB title in 2019, his driving was just exemplary.

"Since we started the Porsche team with JTR, I will often jump in during testing and we have little race offs and do bits of set-up work. But when Dan got a grip of the Porsche, it was amazing. He got to a level where it would have taken me half a day of practice to get up to his speed. He is someone who has really impressed me."

MN sets the scene: Tandy co-drove alongside the charismatic David Ashburn in a Trackspeed Porsche in British GT in 2013 in a colourful season, which included Ashburn writing the car off while coming in to the pits at Silverstone…
Question: Do you now regret telling David Ashburn to push all the way on his in-lap at Silverstone in British GT in 2013…?
Keith Cheetham
[Then-Trackspeed team manager]
Via Facebook
Question: What was it like to have David Ashburn as your team-mate and team boss in the British GT? I co-drove for David when he switched from the circuits to rallying…
Jonny Evans
Via Facebook
NT: "The season I did with David Ashburn was probably the most fun I have ever had in motorsport. It was just a laugh-a-minute thing.

"He had retired from racing, but then realised he had a car spare and thought why not do the opening races. He called and asked me to join him – but it was only for the start of the year.

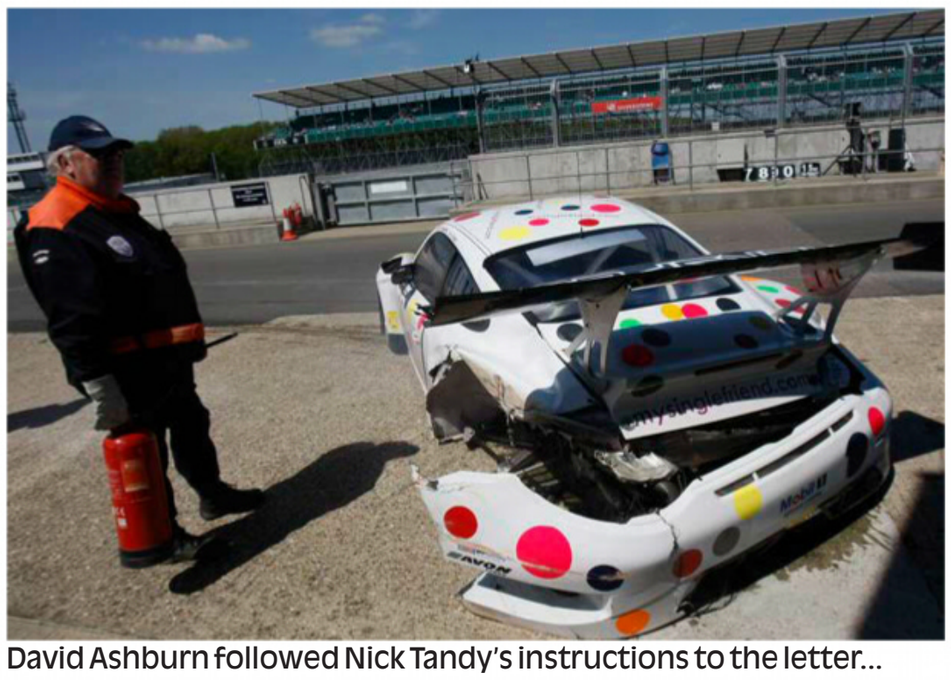
"On our maiden weekend at Oulton Park, we came first and second in the two races! After that, I said to David that maybe we should carry on in the series because we were leading the championship points. He umm-ed and aah-ed about it, but in the end we did the full year.

"David was a good driver, but it was very difficult to keep him focused. He would do a really fast lap, fastest of the amateurs, but then he would do something stupid on the next lap and lose five seconds, for example.

"At the Silverstone three-hour race, I said before the race that he should attack the pit entry because I had seen him just ambling in and shedding loads of time. I told him to go flat out into it and brake at the last moment possible. In the race, it is his turn to come in and we are all suited up waiting for him to come in and the car never arrived.

"There is a kink in the pitlane entrance to the national pits at Silverstone which is not quite flat out in a GT3 car. He tried to go flat out because I had told him to push, had a massive shunt and ripped the engine and gearbox out of the car! I wish I had not encouraged it…" ■

Formula Palmer Audi was Tandy's route into young driver shootout


David Ashburn followed Nick Tandy's instructions to the letter...

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

Mike Jordan (right) on full attack in a TVR at Goodwood

WHY THE JORDAN RACING TEAM IS SETTING NEW STANDARDS FOR HISTORIC RACING

Mike and Andrew Jordan's Jordan Racing Team is now one of the standard-setters on the historic racing scene. Paul Lawrence reports

Chambers was a customer for the "bread and butter" Lotus Cortina

Adrian Wilmot has shared his AC Cobra with 2013 British Touring Car title winner Andrew Jordan

Even to an untrained eye, the engineering work of the Jordan Racing Team is faultless. Drawing on Mike Jordan's 40 years in motorsport, the period cars they build and prepare are superbly engineered and that is matched by on-event presentation. But these are not simply cars that look good. They are hugely effective racers and frequently set the pace in the hands of customers.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, Jordan built his reputation running and racing Porsches under the Eurotech banner. Countless titles and race wins came for customers like David and Godfrey Jones, Peter Chambers and Mark Sumpter.

By dedication, graft and delivering for loyal sponsors, the team rose to running Porsches at FIA GT level and claimed the 2000 British GTO title with Sumpter's 911 GT3-R.

Through the same era, Jordan was racing and winning in Porsches, BMW M3s, Eurocars, TVR Tuscans and then took the 2001 British GT title in a Lister Storm with David Warnock. Jordan was one of the drivers for the works TVR assault on the Le Mans 24-hour in 2003 and had a real trackside adventure trying to get the car running again when the transmission broke on Saturday evening.

To support loyal sponsor John Guest, Jordan and the Eurotech team then moved to the British Touring Car Championship and Mike was later joined on the driving front by his son Andrew. Victory in the 2013 BTCC for Andrew and the family team was a huge achievement and Andrew remained at the forefront of the BTCC until 2019.

Meanwhile, the Eurotech touring car set-up was sold to racer Jeff Smith and Mike pondered his next move. Retirement was never going to be an option and, instead, he started to formulate plans for a future in historic racing. His love of classic Fords and period saloon car racing goes way back and an Austin A40 became the catalyst for a new chapter.

"I reckoned that if we built an Austin A40 and went to Goodwood and showed well, it would be our little showroom," Mike says. "So that was why we did it. It was a chance to go racing with Andrew, have some fun with it and kick start the business. And that's exactly what it did."

> **"It was a chance to race and have some fun too"**
>
> **Mike Jordan**

The Jordan Racing Team was born as a partnership between Mike, his long-suffering wife Judith and Andrew, and it is Andrew who will increasingly lead the team over the coming years.

The relationship with Sumpter goes back three decades and the Porsche guru was the first to order a Lotus Cortina racer from the team.

"It was in 2015, when we started doing historic cars and Mark's Cortina was the first one," says Mike. "He's been a customer with us since 1994. When we got off the touring car fairground ride, Mark was the first customer for a historic car and we've now built over 40 cars."

As well as building cars, including Cortinas, Lotus Elans, Minis and now AC Cobras, the team is busier than ever fielding customer cars at historic race meetings in the UK and across Europe.

"By the end of last year, from all of our clients we had over 30 cars" adds Mike. They're not all ground-up builds from us but most of those we've built from a bare shell. We've gone from one customer and one car in 2015 to 13 clients and over 30 cars." They have recently had to take on more commercial space to cope with storing customer cars.

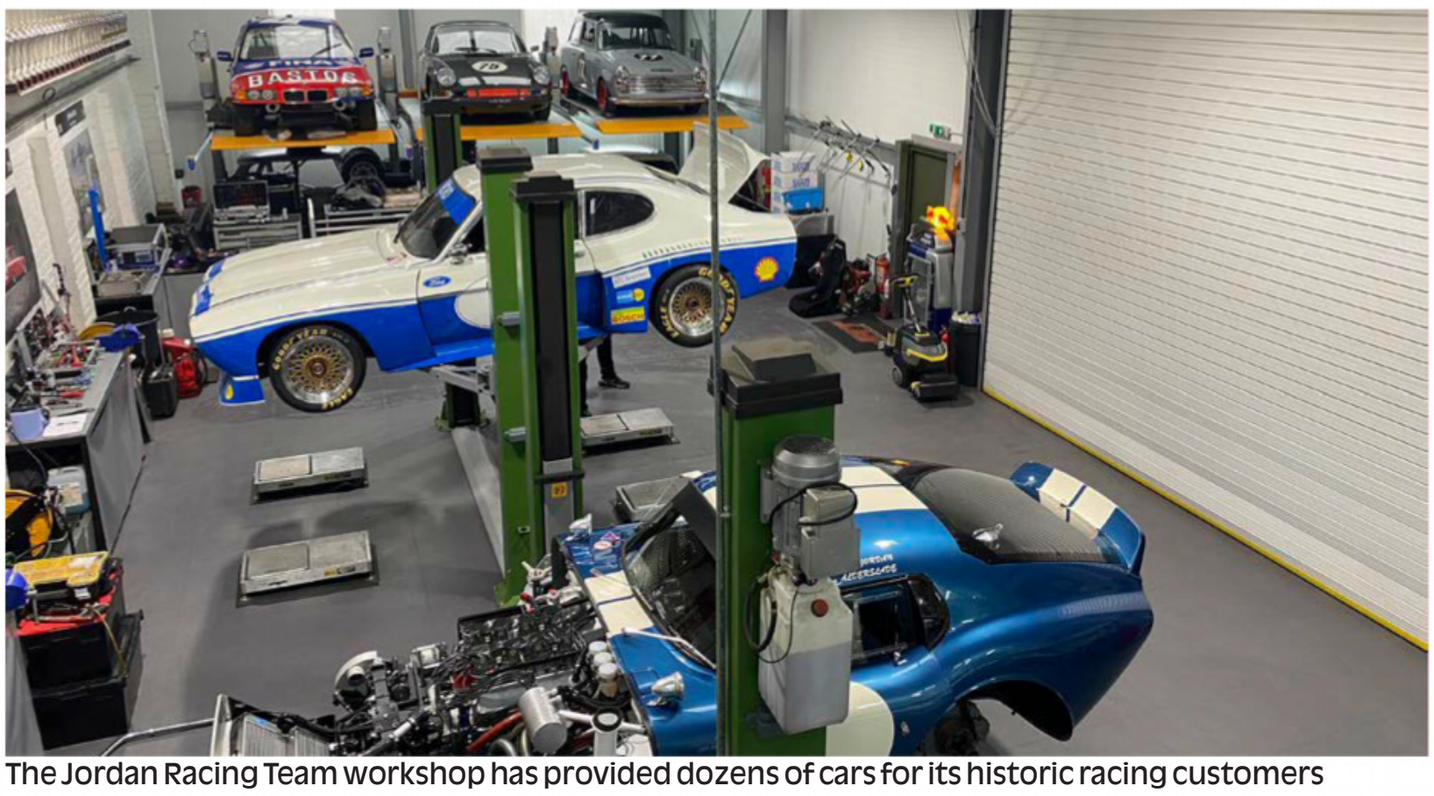
"Cortinas have been the core of the business, the ongoing bread and butter and it still is. We've also done a lot of two-litre Porsche 911s for the 2.0 Cup. That's gone round full circle because we started building Porsches in 1988. It has really taken off. We've got six cars in it now."

Building and running the 911s is a real return to his roots for Mike, who first made his name in the Porsche Cup of the 1980s.

"They have always been beautiful cars to drive but if you are doing something like

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Mike Jordan, Andrew "David Bailey" Jordan

Where it all began: the Austin A40 in '15


The Jordan Racing Team workshop has provided dozens of cars for its historic racing customers

Jordan shared with Mark Sumpter to win British GTO back in 2000

> **"I will fit in around the JRT customers"**
>
> **Andrew Jordan**

the Spa Six Hours, there are always a lot of faster cars out there and you spend most of your time watching your mirror," he explains. "The Peter Auto 2.0L Cup has really grabbed people's imagination and it's probably taken off more than I thought it would. They are very nice events with a really good paddock set-up. They are an expensive car to go and buy but once they've been built properly they are not hugely expensive to run, because it is a Porsche underneath so all the running gear is very good."

While the team has been busy building and preparing cars, Andrew's stepped away from the BTCC treadmill to work full time alongside his dad and their bond is as strong as ever.

Meanwhile, Andrew's younger brother Bradley is now on board as well, ensuring the family feel is central to the team, which has up to 10 people working at the busiest times.

With two young children of his own, Andrew sees JRT as his long-term future. That is something that has always been planned in the background, as the BTCC campaigns were completely reliant on sponsorship. There is no family money to bankroll his place in the BTCC. Importantly, Andrew is able to jump into any of the cars and shake them down, win races and share two-driver races with customers. His driving partnership with Adrian Wilmot in Wilmot's AC Cobra brought great success last season and that will surely continue in 2021. One of the major winter projects has been the build of a Daytona Cobra Coupe, from a Garry Spencer body/chassis, for another customer, Roy Alderslade.

"We have to be selective about our own historic racing due to customers and it has to fit around them," says Andrew, who will also race his Mini Miglia this season. "I don't have to commit to a championship because this will fit around the commitment to customers. I'd love to do them all, but if there is only three or four I can do, that will be fine."

While travel into Europe for Peter Auto events remains under question for the early part of the season, the team will focus on UK events. "We're fortunate to have clients with a broad spread of cars so they can race pretty much anywhere," says Mike.

Things are looking good for Jordan Racing Team heading towards the 2021 season. The workshop is full and the diary of race meetings is busy. New car builds are already booked for next winter and there's even a chance of some racing for Mike and Andrew.

It's been a 40-year journey for Mike to get to this point and Andrew has now been racing for more than 15 years. There have been lots of highs and a few lows but you get the clear impression that they are both very happy with where they are at right now. ■

From very humble beginnings

Mike Jordan well remembers his first race. He was a wide-eyed innocent when he raced a Morris Minor at Aintree 42 years ago.

"My dad Alf was really into his cars. He loved his cars," Mike recalls. "He had a friend who did a little bit of racing in an ERA. My dad used to go with him in the 1950s and they went to Le Mans to spectate. One of his highlights was going to Le Mans in 1955. He was always into his cars, and he was a newspaper sales representative.

"But he'd sort of gone away from the sport and I just pestered him and pestered him from when I was about 10 to go to a motor race. He finally took me to Mallory when I was 14, my first ever race meeting. And that was it.

"That was in the era of Dave Brodie in his Ford Escort Mk1, 'run baby run'. I absolutely adored those sort of Special Saloons and Formula 5000 was really strong then. Once we'd been, all I wanted every weekend was to go to Mallory.

"Steve Thompson was good in Formula 5000 at the time and he was a car dealer in Walsall. His garage was opposite where my dad's Birmingham Post and Mail office was. He was a real hero for me. But it was always saloons that I was really interested in and Escorts in particular. I thought that was fantastic.

"I wasn't great in school and I left and tried to get a job in an architect's office because I liked drawing. But I couldn't do that and the careers' advice was structural engineering. That's drawing and so I've trained to do that and it really just drove me to distraction.

"I can remember standing at a drawing board and thinking I cannot do this for the rest of my life. But I got a couple of qualifications in civil engineering and they were widening the M5 to three lanes and I went to work for Hereford County Council because it was good money.

"A guy I worked with had built a Morris Minor to do Classic Saloons. He raced it once and decided it wasn't for him. I thought I've got to buy that car: this is my chance to go racing. I'd gone from wanting to do Formula Ford and be World champion to 'there's a car there and it's somebody I know'. And all of a sudden it was accessible.

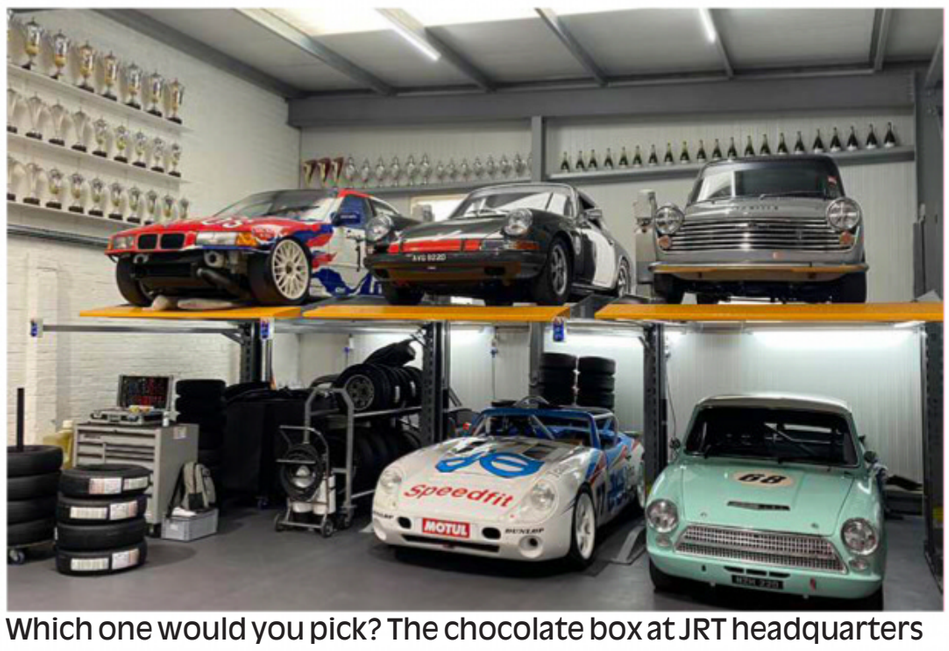
"He wanted £750 for it, and I'd got nothing. I'd got an old Escort Mk1 at the time. So I went to three different banks and I borrowed £250 from each of them. And the plan that I told each of the bank managers was that I was going to buy a Morris Minor as a classic car and restore it and make a profit. So they all lent me £250 to buy the same racing car. That's how it started and I was clueless.

"The first race I ever did was at Aintree and I'd never been to a race meeting other than spectating before. I knew absolutely nothing about it. My mum had died the year previously and my dad was really anti me going racing. He said he thought that was not a good thing to be doing. So he wasn't happy with me at all.

"On April 14 1979 I raced at Aintree. I just drove the thing there and I'd got a little toolbox in there and a big 25-litre jug of fuel, because it had only got a little tank and I thought I might need some fuel. So I drove it there, unloaded everything and raced it. Not one bit of me thought 'what happens if it breaks down?' Or 'what happens if you crash it?' There was none of that. The one thing was I used a lot more fuel getting there and in the race than I thought and I didn't have enough money to put more fuel in to get home.

"I came down the M6 coasting down every hill, just praying I was going to get home and I did just get home. I literally had no money with me. I'd taken about five pounds or something. I went up the night before and slept in the car. I unloaded it, raced it all on my own, then drove it back and I just thought that was amazing. Absolutely amazing. I finished! I was 21 at the time."

Three bank loans were enough to get Mike Jordan on the track



Which one would you pick? The chocolate box at JRT headquarters

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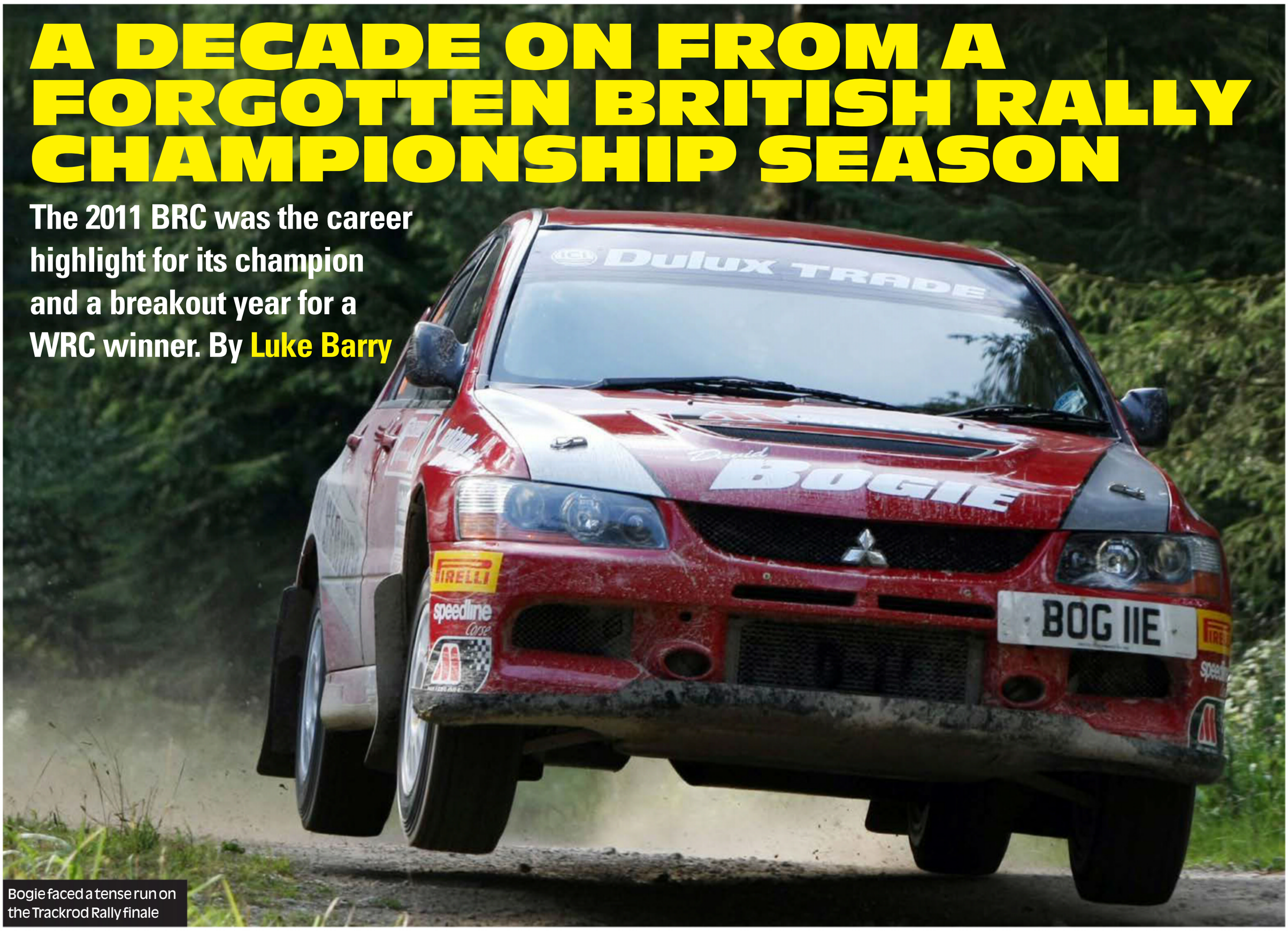
FEATURE

A DECADE ON FROM A FORGOTTEN BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

The 2011 BRC was the career highlight for its champion and a breakout year for a WRC winner. By Luke Barry



Bogie faced a tense run on the Trackrod Rally finale

At first glance, there's nothing particularly vintage about the 2011 British Rally Championship season. Although the title battle was still alive on the final round, it was essentially a foregone conclusion, and the star names like Mark and David Higgins, Guy Wilks and Gwyndaf Evans had evaporated from the series.

But dig a little deeper and actually, 2011 was a rather significant year that is often (wrongfully) overlooked. David Bogie became British Rally champion at the tender age of just 24, creating a nice slice of history as the only Scotsman outside the McRae clan to take the crown.

To make the success that bit sweeter, he became the first, and so far only, driver to win both the Scottish and British titles in the same year too.

It was also current Toyota World Rally Championship star Elfyn Evans's breakthrough season at a national level as he stepped up to four-wheel drive. A title-winning return in 2016 aside, 2011 was Evans's last full season competing nationally before making the jump into the world scene. The third challenger was Northern Ireland's Jonny Greer who had led the points heading into the 2010 finale before Keith Cronin won. Greer represented the new breed of cars in a Skoda Fabia S2000 against Bogie and Evans's Group N machines. But it would be the last the BRC would see of either specification of cars for a good few years as the series was exclusively for two-wheel-drive cars from 2012.

Rallye Sunseeker was an all-new round to kick off the 2011 season in February, but the pre-season shenanigans were in full swing long before that. Whispers were that Super 2000 cars were going to be the ones to have, as proved by Craig Breen's performances in a Ford Fiesta the year before. While Bogie admits "we did look at Super 2000 but we didn't look at it for very long" before committing to running his own Mitsubishi Lancer E9, Greer took a different stand.

"At that stage there was a bit of a crossover," Greer says. "The chat was everyone was going to go Super 2000 so we were still, even January time, very much in two camps as to whether to stick with the E9 or try and go Super 2000. We had seen a car for sale from Raimund Baumschlager and it went from there. The S2000 car was faster than the Group N so, on paper, that gave us an advantage so we did think it would be a successful season. We knew it would be tough to try and make the S2000 car work but we still believed it was the best way to go."

There would be teething problems, and Greer and the other Fabia S2000 of Robert Barrable would only manage sixth and seventh respectively on the opening round. "With the very wet nature of the stages the cars just didn't have the torque to work with the Group N machinery of that time," remembers Greer.

The Sunseeker would set the tone for the year. Bogie, fresh from winning the first round of the Scottish series, fended off a 19-year-old Tom Cave to clinch his first BRC win.

"We had no intention of doing both championships and won the first round of each," Bogie says. "It kind of went from there. We had a good car and it was one of those years where really I could do no wrong."

However, it wasn't Bogie bossing the scene on the second round: Bulldog International Rally of North Wales. This was the event that Evans had received his Pirelli Star Driver nomination on the previous year that allowed him to win the shootout and contest the 2011 season in a Pirelli-backed Subaru Impreza. Adam Gould's sister car was out of the traps the quickest in '11, but as soon as the rally headed into Dyfi forest Evans hit the front. He and co-driver Andrew Edwards claimed their first BRC win on their local stages and were followed home by Bogie, who held a narrow two-point series lead.

> **"It seemed I could do no wrong that year"**
>
> **David Bogie**

"I don't think anybody expected us to win," Edwards admits. "There was no pressure on us. It [Pirelli Star Driver prize] was a opportunity and that's how we looked at it. And if you look at the season, OK we won Rally North Wales but it was more local knowledge because obviously [on the] Pirelli, the third round, Bogie was strong again."

Evans was keeping Bogie honest in the early phases in Kielder but the Mitsubishi had the edge, opening up a 12.8-second advantage before Evans's event unravelled with a puncture and power steering problems. Bogie wouldn't relent though, sweeping to 10 stage wins from 13 to record a dominant 1m02.1s victory over Barrable's Skoda.

Despite an alternator problem that robbed Greer of his lights in the dark on the opening evening, he finished third. He would go one better on the Jim Clark Rally's asphalt tests a month later, but it could have been more.

"We got caught out on the first night on slicks in the rain and dropped a pile of time on the first run through Abbey St Bathans," Greer explains. "That was the one that got away because it would've set us up for the rest of the season. The Saturday was bone dry and the S2000s had a massive advantage over the Group N car so we were trying to use that as best we could but David kept the pace up and held out until the end. It was a bit of a missed opportunity on our side."

Bogie was back on a roll. Although Barrable had initially led the championship leader's home round, he was out with alternator trouble after two stages and Bogie was in the mood, resisting Greer's challenge to close out a third win from four rounds. To top it all off, the next day he won the Scottish championship round on the same stages in a Metro 6R4. "When we won the Sunseeker, people sat up and thought 'bloody hell' so we had a lot of support," Bogie recalls. "On the Scottish round, I can still remember, there were so many people out on the stages cheering us on."

There was then a near three month lay-off between the Jim Clark and the Ulster Rally, and the narrative of the season began to switch. With Evans a quiet fourth in Scotland, Bogie had a 12-point lead and had it all to lose. He says: "I'd got to the stage where I'd done all the hard work with three wins and a second place, and I thought now I need to be consistent. That was my plan in Ulster. It was a conservative drive. I thought if I come here and don't salvage any points I'm

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Evans fought hard all year

David Bogie (l) and Kevin Rae took the British and Scottish crowns

Marty McCormack: Victory in a Citroen on the Ulster Rally was a shock

RESULTS

BRC 2011

	DRIVER	CAR	PTS
1	David Bogie	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	110
2	Elfyn Evans	Subaru Impreza STI N15	100
3	Jonny Greer	Skoda Fabia S2000	95
4	Marty McCormack	Citroen DS3 R3	74
5	Mikko Pajunen	Renault Twingo R2	49

going to be back in the fight whereas at that stage I had a healthy lead."

So with Bogie not setting the timing screens alight, who would? Given his asphalt form a round earlier, Greer would've been a safe bet but his agonising year continued in Northern Ireland.

He was forced to upgrade his Fabia from Evo 1 to Evo 2 spec in line with FIA homologation rules – a performance advantage yes but it meant he was once again unfamiliar with his steed. A broken front driveshaft on the first day pegged him back to fourth at the finish, one spot behind Bogie.

He did at least better than Evans, despite the Welshman's pace. A puncture on the rally's first stage left Evans 2m44.1s adrift of the lead from the get-go, and that was a gap not even his nine stage wins from 13 could overcome. Instead, the stage was set for Marty McCormack to steal the show. The local lad led from the outset and wouldn't budge, sealing an unlikely victory in his Citroen DS3 R3 – the first for a two-wheel-drive car in the BRC since 2000. "To do that was fantastic," says McCormack. "It was a big thing to tick that box for everybody."

McCormack was doing more than ticking boxes though, he was dominating; and not just in Ulster. Skipping the opening round as a deal was still being finalised, McCormack was second in class behind Mark Donnelly's Renault Clio in Wales which he thought was a reasonable return on his first rally with a professional team and a new car. Perhaps not. "A few days later I got a phone call and it was a guy at Citroen, and the ballsing he gave me for getting beat by a Clio!" McCormack reveals. "His words were 'I wish you'd have wrecked the car instead' and I was like 'oh my God is this what being involved in a factory's like?'"

It was all upward from there as McCormack would go on to win the class on the remaining four rounds and seal a superb fourth overall in the championship. Testing for Ulster had been interesting though, as Citroen Sport was adamant McCormack should use Bryan Bouffier's set-up after he had given the DS3 R3 its debut pre-homologation on the rally 12 months earlier. But McCormack wanted less toe in at the rear to make the car more stable over the Irish bumps. What followed was a tale that echoes Petter Solberg on Corsica 2003 and Thierry Neuville on Rally Germany 2014.

"The car was set-up more for turning in than it was straightline speed over bumps," McCormack remembers. "They adjusted what they felt was right. I approached a section over the mountain where I knew I took this section flat in fifth in the C2 [the year before], so I went to take it flat in fifth in the DS. The thing went a little bit wrong, we ended up going into the hedge and rolled the car down into the moss. The boys got the car fixed but I got my own way with the geometry!"

McCormack's victory teed him up for the two-wheel-drive title on the season finale: Trackrod Rally Yorkshire. Bogie was well placed, leading the standings by 14 points over Evans with just 20 left to claim. However Bogie wasn't taking any chances despite the comfortable points situation. "We were carrying spare parts of everything," Bogie says. "It was just a case of running the car full of fuel, full of tools, full of parts and just getting it round."

Going into the final stage, Langdale, Bogie was lying third behind Greer and eventual rally winner Evans – the only man who could at that point spoil Bogie's party. But halfway through the stage he had to wind the window down as he was shaking and feeling sick.

"It was a hell of a pressure, I've never felt pressure like that before because we were so close," he explains. "We finished on the podium and it all came good [but] I was starting to think about it, and I've learned since then. I go into the first corner the same as I go into the last corner.

Greer adapted to his new Skoda

"There's only ever been four Scotsman to win: all three McRaes and then myself. So that's something I'm quite proud of," Bogie adds. "It's probably the highlight of my career."

Edwards believes he and Evans could've fought Bogie and Rae closer had lady luck been kinder: "Ulster was the one that got away," he says. "There's a good chance we'd have won that rally which then would've put us in a better place – there'd have been a big shootout then on the Trackrod. Things would have panned out very differently if the season would have run its course [including the Manx] and we hadn't had that puncture on Ulster."

Greer doesn't look back on 2011 with much fondness either, confessing: "It wasn't driving the car properly and it was kind of like a [vicious] circle. Coming from the Group N car which was a lot more sedate and you had to be gentle with it, with the S2000 car you had to grab it by the scruff of the neck. I had no confidence, the car wouldn't go fast.

"I can't apportion any blame to anybody but myself that season, it's just I didn't perform. Yes, we had a few unlucky things with mechanicals but even with that we had the car advantage to do it.

"David had a great season, he was the complete opposite of me: when he needed to perform he performed. When I needed to perform, I didn't." ■

THE 2011 BATTLE PACK: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

While David Bogie and Jonny Greer never kicked onto the next level after the 2011 British Rally Championship season for a multitude of reasons, Elfyn Evans quite clearly did.

Winning the 2012 WRC Academy series elevated him into WRC2 for 2013 and then ultimately a WRC seat in 2014. But how do the others feel about Evans's rise?

"My attitude is you always want to see one guy of your generation succeed," Greer says. "You're all trying to strive for the same goal and it's nice to see that somebody made it out of the bunch. I certainly remember when he came to the Ulster and he'd been out to do Finland in an R2 car, and it was like a different driver.

"From there on if you want to be poetic about it, that's where his career took off and mine completely stalled. I couldn't perform at that level even if the chips had fallen the right way. You have to respect the amount of work he's put in over the years and the amount of things he's had to deal with."

Bogie offers: "People still ask me now, do you wish you'd gone two-wheel drive and maybe done JWRC and went down the same route as Elfyn did? Probably not. I said after I won the BRC although I had ambition, if I never won anything else after that I'd still be more than happy with what I'd achieved. We're two different drivers who took two different career paths but I'm pretty happy with how my life is today and I'm pretty sure Elfyn will be as well."

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FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Pulling is an F4 title favourite

JHR racer was sixth in '20 table

PULLING POWER

A female winning an FIA drivers' title is a rare feat, but with Abbi Pulling it is a distinct possibility this year in British F4. Graham Keilloh gets her take on the season ahead

Whatever the reasons, and the rights and wrongs, we know how motorsport tends to be on gender balance. Female competitors remain a stark minority and female competitors bagging championships, and in FIA competitions, are much rarer still. But in this year's British Formula 4 championship it looks entirely possible for a woman to get the title. The woman is Abbi Pulling.

Last year in her British F4 single-seater debut Pulling finished sixth in the standings with four podium finishes. This year the 17-year-old returns, still with the JHR Developments team, and at the time of writing is the highest from 2020's table to be coming back.

"Definitely, I've got my eyes on the title," she tells Motorsport News. "The crown is definitely on the cards this year."

Her JHR team boss Steven Hunter agrees. "There's no question, she's got to be a contender for the championship," he tells MN. "Her mental set is certainly in that direction. I genuinely think that she's quick enough to be up there and certainly battling for race wins."

There are also more specific reasons to think Pulling is well set for a title charge. "Abbi's certainly up there with those [other top] drivers [I've worked with]," Hunter continues. "You've already got the building blocks for a really good driver there.

"The very first [2020] round [in] qualifying was the point when you realised how good she really is. She came in halfway through qualifying for tyres having not really put a lap together and put under pressure with five, six minutes to go; she knows she's got a maximum of two laps to go and she upped her game 10 places straight away. They are the little elements where you go 'there really is a real talented driver there'."

Last year, too, her track time was relatively scant compared to rivals plus, beyond karting, she had only a handful of Ginetta races behind her in car competition. "It was obviously a learning season for her," Hunter notes. "She certainly showed some real promise, especially the latter half of the year.

"Her dedication and commitment to the work that needs to be put in to really up your game to what I consider as a real racing driver has been exceptional, and it showed in the results. The work ethic was second to none, I don't think I've ever had a driver that works as hard. Her level of determination is unbelievable."

And that this will be her second year in the category is important. "When they come back into the second year, the confidence is just so much higher," Hunter adds. "The ability to get up to pace quickly is already there because you've done the learning experiences and the pounding the laps out, so the performance improves massively."

Pulling concurs. "Now it's definitely all about the quality of what we're doing," she says. "Last year, at that point, you're trying to get used to the car and make it feel as natural as you can. And this year I've finally got that and I'm firing on all cylinders.

Work with Alice Powell has brought on Pulling "leaps and bounds"

Second place at Thruxton last season was "pivotal" for Pulling

"I'm ready to go, every day I'm doing something towards my season, it's so important and I just want to get out to the first round, I feel like I'm ready to already get out into that first qualifying session."

And, with the resolve and work ethic outlined, Pulling is doing several things to prepare. "There's the physical side of it, [and there's] doing mental prep. The mental side is heavily disregarded in motorsport and it's very important. My mindset at the moment is great in testing and when I'm not in the car; I like to think that I'm as best prepared as I can be."

And Pulling, to help her preparation, has a familiar face alongside her now in Alice Powell. They've known each other since Pulling was in karting and Powell from the mid-part of last year has been a more permanent help.

"She's helping me out loads," Pulling explains. "It brought me on leaps and bounds. I look up to Alice more than I want to admit! She's taught me how all the prep is even more important than the time on track, because that's what's making the quality of your on-track time that much better. I can't wait to have that whole season working with her as opposed to just half the season."

For this and other reasons, Pulling feels her improvement during 2020 was tangible. "My racecraft, that was one of the things that really helped me last year. This year we're having full reversed-grid races, which I'm quite excited about because I've got all confidence in that side of my driving.

"There was maybe things that I did wrong last year but I've learnt from it, the only way to get better is to make those mistakes and I'm really confident that I've got things nailed for this year. My technical ability has come on so much. [And] just being able to be on it from the get go, having that confidence in the car from the early stages. It's just refining all those little areas, I'm coming back stronger.

"I think I reacted quite well under pressure, I think it makes me fight harder. Thruxton [last year] was a massive pivotal moment in what I was doing and I learnt so much from it. Again I made mistakes early that weekend, but I bounced back in the last race [and finished second]. It's all about how you bounce back and that's going to be sorted for this year: not looking at the past, just focus on the future."

It all appears to be making a difference where it matters on track, if Pulling's test running for 2021 is a guide. "It's all down to the development in the car and the set-ups that we're doing," she says.

"Every time I jump in the car, all these tracks that I haven't been to in a while, it's like I almost never left and, I don't think you can do the perfect lap, but I've been doing near-perfect laps. If I could explain what's been going on I would, but I've been really happy with what I've been doing and I really hope that I can continue this throughout the season. I've been so switched on, and I can't do much better I feel! Well actually that's a lie, I can do better, you can always do better! But I've been feeling really really nice and comfortable and at home.

"I'm just going to be focusing on what I need to do to get the job done. And I've been in a title-contending position before in go-karting so I know what it takes to win a championship. I reckon if I keep this mindset throughout the season or adjust it to the situations needed I can get the job done.

"I don't think people are quite ready for what they're in for. There was different championships on the cards for us [for 2021], bigger series, but I've got a plan in place and the end point in a few years was the same place so it made sense to go for this title challenge." ■

"For this year I'm firing on all cylinders"

Abbi Pulling

Sometimes it's hard to be a woman...

"I actually think that Abbi's end result of the [2020] season, I feel that her capabilities were better than that," JHR boss Steven Hunter notes. "She found herself in one or two little areas where, a girl in a boys' world, you tend to find they're a little bit rougher with her than they should be.

"A perfect example was Knockhill, she went off pole, she never even made it into the first corner, somebody run straight into the back of her. She did have quite a few moments [last year] where considering it's a non-contact sport she tended to get a lot of contact from behind!"

It was something Pulling noticed too. "In some cases it was bad luck. But definitely I think people see the pink [livery] and they're like 'I can't let her beat me! I can't get beaten by a girl!' I think that does cross the drivers' minds," she says.

"This year I'm not really thinking about that, I've got a clean slate. I think with confidence I can say I didn't really do anything last year that put people in danger. I hope that I get the respect on track this year that I deserve and I'll give the same respect back. I'll be being hard on everyone but I assume everyone's going to be quite hard on me as well. But I'm prepared for it.

"I'm just the one that's laughing, hopefully looking in my mirrors thinking 'try and get by me or see you later', hopefully 'have fun looking at my rear end in the distance'!"

Pulling was often punted

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FEATURE

HOW LAPPI WAS LEFT STANDING WHEN THE WRC MUSIC STOPPED

The Finnish star is looking at a threadbare year, but is ambitious. By Graham Lister

Lappi's M-Sport deal was beset with frustrations

The Finn was left high and dry when Citroen pulled out after 2019

When Esapekka Lappi made his shock switch to Citroen from Toyota ahead of the 2019 season, the move, on paper, was viewed as shrewd.

The French firm was back as a full factory entrant with a C3 WRC packed with promise and Sebastien Ogier was not on its driver roster, suggesting number one status was possible. Furthermore, Ott Tanak was flexing his muscles at Toyota to the extent that had Lappi stayed put it would have been in a supporting role.

In the event, Ogier eventually moved across from M-Sport for 2019, leaving Lappi to battle a C3 that was far from his instant liking and as a number two to boot. And when Ogier quit Citroen for Toyota at the end of 2019, Citroen quit the WRC entirely, leaving Lappi dry but not high for 2020.

He found 11th-hour salvation at M-Sport, partly because he didn't have to bring cash to secure his seat, but also because his Citroen severance pay covered his wages. That meant the British squad didn't have to find extra resources to welcome in its latest Finn.

When the Covid pandemic made the tall order that was picking up decent results against the might of big-spending Hyundai and Toyota taller still, Lappi faced the prospect of essentially standing still for the first time in a career that previously moved with pace and purpose. His year ended in the same vein as it did in 2019, only this time there was no M-Sport waiting to pick up the pieces.

Although spending 2021 building a new house for his young family appealed initially, he soon wised up to the fact that WRC drives are not earned by laying bricks.

"I am still interested to drive on the top level," Lappi says. "I know the chances are very thin to get a seat but definitely if I stay at home I have no chance to get anything. That's why I would like to do some races to keep my name on the lists and on the lips of people. When they are deciding the seats or jobs for the future [I want them] remembering my name as well or at least considering it."

Lappi's first attempt at securing his WRC future was a WRC2 outing on Arctic Rally Finland last month, which ended in a dominant victory. And he doesn't want his comeback to end there.

"In the big picture I hope it's not only one race that I will do," he says.

"There are plans or ideas to do some more as well but in this situation, the way the world is at the moment, nothing is sure. I can't really say anything about them before things are really happening. But it's not only one rally I hope."

Given his rise up the ranks and clear ability, Lappi should have started 2021 gainfully employed. But life has a habit of not being fair.

"If you want to be depressive you can think like that but it's been sort of bad luck in some situations but also I could have chosen differently in the past," Lappi admits. "But that's very easy to say afterwards. It's a shame where I am at the moment but still, I am a very happy man. In the end, rally is just a sport or a job and you have more important things in your life than rally, at least I do in my life. That's the family and the kids and when we experienced the pandemic last year, I had

> **"It is a shame but I am still a happy man"**
>
> **Esapekka Lappi**

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

A lack of testing made life in the Fiesta WRC tough

Winning WRC2 on the Arctic Rally was a boost

the chance to be at home a lot. I got used to it and I could see what I was missing when I am away. That's why I am really satisfied with the situation I am in right now. But still there is the competitive side of me who wants to compete, who wants to develop and be a rally driver. I feel I have some unfinished business."

Had he chosen differently in the past, would he have stayed at Toyota? "That's very easy to say afterwards," he responds. "Maybe, but for sure we don't know if I would continue with Toyota for example for one more year and then what after that? Maybe there wasn't any deal for 2020, you can't know about these things and that's why it's a bit stupid to play the game, if and but, if and but. But for that moment when I made the decision to leave it looked very good to get a deal with Citroen. The future should have been strong but we all know what happened later on."

The manner of Citroen's rapid exit shocked rallying and left Lappi feeling betrayed.

"I was annoyed, definitely, and that it also came so late," he says. "It was almost December, very, very late and all the seats were basically gone. For sure it was really cool that I got the seat with M-Sport and with Malcolm [Wilson] but I felt sort of betrayed and let down. The year [2019 at Citroen] wasn't really good for me as well because I was really struggling with the car. But we made some steps in the second half, definitely with the car, and we had some good parts for 2020 coming in. It was a bad situation and I felt really bad."

The planned car changes for 2020 could have helped Lappi following his early struggles, but he never got the chance to put them into practice.

"For sure we didn't fix all the challenges and issues what we had [with Citroen] in 2019 but some of them [we fixed], definitely," he recalls. "I'm pretty sure the car would have been very competitive on high-speed gravel events [in 2020]. The new aero was really impressive and it was really, really fast when I drove it in Finland just before the last rallies. I am sure there was a lot of potential on the car and still we were missing the new engine which I never managed to drive. There was a lot of potential coming, definitely."

With Ogier set for WRC retirement at the end of this year, an opening at Toyota exists (Lappi "talked" with his former team-mate and new Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala prior to climbing the Arctic Rally Finland podium). He also likes what he experienced at M-Sport, despite the impact Covid had on his 2020 season with the Cumbria outfit.

"For sure when somebody leaves there is a door open but there are many drivers at the moment that want to be [at Toyota]," Lappi concedes. "I realise that the chance is very thin for me even if I win all the races that I do this year. I am not the strongest contender for the seat because I am not doing the full series and stuff like that. But I would still like to hope there is a possibility. There are going to be available seats at M-Sport, from what I understood from Malcolm, so there are chances and that's why we are working on the programme for this year.

"Probably I was there [at M-Sport] in the worst time and we had some challenges and lack of resources I would say in some situations," says Lappi. "I would be interested to see how the team is working when it's at full force. The people are really nice and it feels familiar to be there, but it's always down to the resources."

If the resources weren't ultimately available for Lappi to continue at the top level, would he look back with sense of satisfaction or regret?

"Sort of yes and mostly no," the 30-year-old admits. "I would be satisfied with what I've achieved but still the target is higher. I've made the steps, I've won the European championship and I've won the WRC2 championship. The next one definitely would be the WRC. For sure I would like to win more races than one and not only in Finland. That's sort of what I feel I could maybe have done if I have a few more years." ■

How Lappi is still leading the 2021 WRC points chase...

While Kalle Rovanpera was busy claiming his best WRC finish to date with second place on Arctic Rally Finland to move to the top of the World championship standings, the man who built his first proper rally car was back in the big time and winning WRC2.

Before he became hot property in the WRC, Esapekka Lappi worked for Printsport Racing, a top team from Finland with whom he claimed his national title in 2012.

"I was building rally cars and servicing them while driving," Lappi remembers. "In 2011 and 2012 I drove in a Citroen C2 R2 on some rallies. There was a young guy at that time, a very small one actually, whose name was Kalle Rovanpera.

"He wanted to, or maybe it was his dad who wanted to, let Kalle test my Citroen.

"We had a test, I was co-driving Kalle and they decided to buy that kind of car. When Kalle drove the Citroen C2 R2 in 2013 and 2014 in Latvia that car was partly built by me."

Although Lappi competed under the Movisport banner on the Rovaniemi event, Printsport was on hand to run his Volkswagen Polo GTI R5, making for an unlikely homecoming.

Why the M-Sport journey delivered despite the odds

As a replacement for Elfyn Evans goes, Esapekka Lappi wasn't a bad call for M-Sport when he joined the British team for 2020, essentially taking over the Toyota-bound Welshman's Ford Fiesta WRC.

Fourth on the Monte and fifth in Sweden represented a decent start for the Anglo-Finnish alliance and things were looking promising in Mexico after six stages. Until disaster struck.

"Mexico was getting better again but then we had the fire and then Covid," M-Sport team boss Richard Millener says. "That cost us closer to £600,000 and we never managed to catch up because our testing stopped and our season kind of came to an end.

"It was difficult because 'EP' obviously wants to win and competing against the other teams who are testing when you're doing absolutely nothing is quite hard and it was understandable that it was frustrating for him, it was frustrating for myself and the team, but we didn't have the budget.

"When you look at the amount of time he had in the car it was hardly anything. Over the course of the year, you'd expect a normal driver to be doing 10-15 days of testing plus all the rallies. He did seven rallies and three days of testing so it's really not so much. But we had a lot of positive feedback from the guys, he's very experienced and he's a WRC winner. At the end of the day, you've got to be good to do that."

Asked if Lappi is on M-Sport's radar for a drive in 2022 when the Rally1 rules come on stream, Millener is less committal.

"The longer you're out of a car the harder it is to turn it around and if we're being totally honest, we're concentrating on the three guys [Adrien Fourmaux, Gus Greensmith and Teemu Suninen] we have at the moment. Anything can happen and it wouldn't be a complete no. I've never had a problem with him, he would bring a lot to the team and I like him as a person. But, ultimately, it would still come down to driver budgets for us."

Lappi was a points scorer from the outset with M-Sport

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COLUMNIST

DAN CAMMISH

Ex-Team Dynamics BTCC driver on losing his seat and the chances ahead

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Cammish was a winner for Honda

Cammish and Team Dynamics boss Matt Neal (r)

It has been an interesting few weeks for me. Losing my place on the British Touring Car Championship grid in the Team Dynamics Honda team was something that did come as a real blow.

I found out a few days before the announcement that I was not going to be retained when I had a phone call from team boss Matt Neal. However, I did know a few weeks before that, that things were getting rocky when James Rodgers, the Dynamics team manager, called me to say that it was unlikely the team would be able to provide me with the fully professional drive I had enjoyed the previous seasons.

So when Matt did give me the bad news I was ready for it. I had also discussed the situation with a few long-term mentors and this gave me encouragement and support that is always helpful when you hit problems.

I have been around motor racing for a long time and nothing really surprises me any more, so even though I had a two-year deal with the team at the end of 2019 and thought I was in the car, I knew that the deal was always contingent on the team being able to fund me in the championship.

If we rewind for a moment I had looked at the BTCC ahead of 2017 when my sponsors at the time had discussions with WSR. They eventually came to nothing. Instead I continued my Porsche journey and raced in the Porsche Supercup in 2017, which is a high-level series with many professional drivers. I had planned to continue there ahead of 2018.

The only teams in BTCC that could have influenced my decision to leave the European championship were either Team Dynamics or WSR, so when I got the chance at Team Dynamics it was incredible.

I really enjoyed being a factory driver and learned a great deal that hopefully I can put to good use in the future.

I owe Team Dynamics a very big personal thanks for giving me the opportunity, and supporting me through some bad as well as good times. My only regret, which will stay with me, is not winning the title in 2019. Yes I would have 'pinched' it, but 14 podiums and sheer tenacity kept us in the hunt all year. We, at Dynamics, refused to let WSR get away from us and we were an ever-present thorn in their side. Had it not been for a freak occurrence I would be writing this as a BTCC champion.

While there is no doubt the timing of the decision of me leaving was not ideal for me personally, as it is so close to the season starting. It also shows just how hard Dynamics was pushing to keep me on the grid. Matt told me he and all the team did everything possible and did not give up until the last minute and I thank him for the efforts. Matt has always been open with me as both a boss and a team-mate.

I learned so much from him and I honestly think we will work together again in the future. He is currently looking at other options for me, he doesn't need to do this but it is the type of gentleman he is. I have parted on excellent terms with everyone in the team and will no doubt be getting a coffee in the hospitality when I can.

Cammish made his reputation with Porsche titles

The BTCC is very tough and Team Dynamics is results driven, so the end of this season will be the true indicator of how I delivered the potential of the FK8 over the last few years.

What I do know is with no front-wheel-drive experience prior to 2018 I now have 31 podiums to my name and twice kept the championship alive until the final moments.

I have much to be proud of in just three seasons and always gave my best for the team and its supporters. I would like to thank those who have shown overwhelming support this past week. I truly was not expecting such a response to the news.

In regards to possibilities for the future I am fortunate that I had a European career going for me two to three years before I became competitive in the BTCC and it's surprising how many people have been in touch this last week.

I do not think another BTCC drive is possible in the immediate future even though a number of team bosses have showed interest these past few days. I have always kept close to Simon Leonard of Redline Racing (having won Carrera Cup GB titles in 2015 and 2016) who has given me support and advice over these past few years.

My main focus is continuing as a professional racing driver. Also, as I am 32 next birthday, I want to look at what is possible both inside and outside of racing over the next few years.

I am confident things will work out and sometimes things happen for a reason. I have had ups and downs before, what is done is done and I now need to look to the future.

"I have no regrets and I enjoyed every moment with Team Dynamics"

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

Nick Tandy, left, got that winning feeling in 2015

Our readers' Q&A guest this week Nick Tandy is one with the ultimate accolade of winning the Le Mans 24-hour race. And what's more he did it with Porsche, arguably the event's most storied name.

And Porsche on YouTube has a 53-minute documentary charting how it got to its 2015 triumph, starting three years prior with the project's conception. The marque winning in only the second try of its Le Mans top-tier comeback was an achievement, yet the film makes clear that the victory of Tandy's car, alongside Nico Hulkenberg and Earl Bamber, was even less likely. "I don't want to call them outsiders," the team notes, "but [it was] let's say a rookie car with two youngsters and a Formula 1 star".

The immediate impression from watching, as may be inevitable with such things, is of a polished PR film, but still the account makes clear the bumps in the road experienced during the three-year gestation. All of the team's major players are front and centre, and there's pleasant footage from behind the scenes and of the Le Mans atmosphere.

You can watch it at: youtube.com/watch?v=w_QazJD9nyI or you can search for 'Our Return: A documentary of our road to Le Mans 2015'.

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

After what seems roughly 30 seconds since the last Formula 1 season ended, the 2021 F1 season is (sort of) officially upon us tomorrow with Bahrain's pre-season testing. The Sky Sports F1 channel has live coverage of all three days, and each evening there's a 15-minute testing wrap (Friday to Sunday, 2000hrs-2015hrs) followed by a Ted Kravitz notebook of the same length (Friday to Sunday, 2015hrs-2030hrs).

The channel also offers retro F1 highlights to keep us entertained during each day's lunch break from 1100hrs to 1145hrs. Tomorrow we have Niki Lauda's belated Austrian Grand Prix home win for McLaren in 1984; the home win theme continues on Saturday with Nigel Mansell's Silverstone 1987 Williams-Honda tour de force while on Sunday it's a home win in spirit as Jean Alesi claims his only F1 victory in a #27 Ferrari at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Sky Sports F1 also has a couple of full Bahrain Grands Prix from yesteryear, 2007's (Saturday, 1600hrs-1815hrs) and 2013's (Sunday, 1600hrs-1815hrs).

While on ITV4 there's some British touring car support action from Brands Hatch last year in Motorsport UK, showing Porsche Carrera Cup and Ginetta Juniors early on Sunday (0705hrs-0755hrs) then Formula 4 and Mini Challenge even earlier on Tuesday (0145hrs-0240hrs).

Graham Keilloh

Kravitz loves the flo-vis...

LIVE TV

Formula 1
Testing, Bahrain
- **Day 1:** Friday 0650hrs-1100hrs and 1150hrs-1600hrs, Sky Sports F1
- **Day 2:** Saturday 0650hrs-1100hrs and 1150hrs-1600hrs, Sky Sports F1
- **Day 3:** Sunday 0650hrs-1100hrs and 1150hrs-1600hrs, Sky Sports F1

NASCAR
Phoenix Raceway
- **Race:** Sunday, 1900hrs-2300hrs, Premier Sports 2

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Mike Stokoe is pleased with Graham Lomax's classic photograph from a Barbon hillclimb

David Harbey's sideways Goodwood photo

Letting it all hang out, from Rich Cranston

Robert Taylor's truck pic from Watkins Glen

Attacking Donington, by Rich Cranston

Neil Ormston reflects on Rockingham oval...

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, MARCH 18

**Correct at time of going to press*

READERS' Q&A:

WILL GOLLOP

We speak to the British hero who conquered European rallycross

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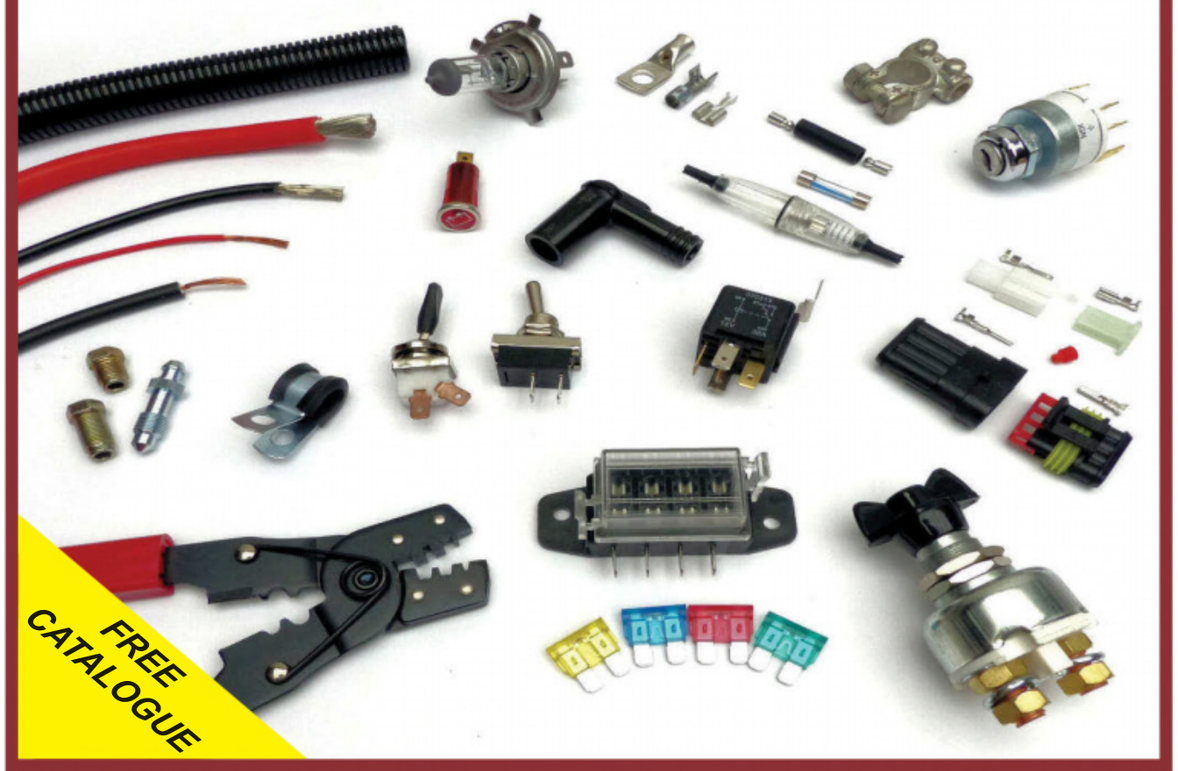

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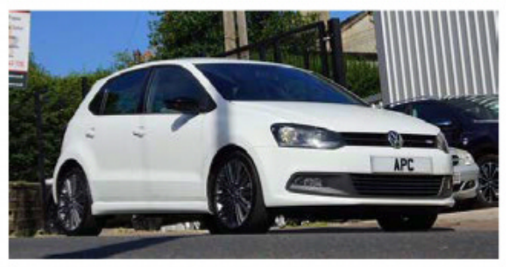

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